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Arab-Israeli Talks

Israeli, Palestinian Negotiators Meet in Cairo

Delegation Heads Meet Separately

NC2102134095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1245 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Feb (MENA)—Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, head of the Palestinian delegation to the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on the legislative elections, met separately with Yo'el Singer, director of the legal department at the Israeli Foreign Ministry and head of the Israeli delegation to the negotiations, at noon today. Palestinian sources pointed out that the meeting dealt with the topics that will be discussed in the current round of talks, which will begin later tonight. The talks will deal with the rules and principles of holding legislative elections in the Palestinian territories. The previous round of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations ended without any progress worth mentioning. 'Urayqat noted that the previous round reached a deadlock, which threatens the entire negotiating process, because the Israeli party does not want to comply with its pledges regarding the legislative elections.

Talks on Elections Begin

NC2102141395 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1325 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Feb (MENA)—The 10th round of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on the legislative elections in the territories belonging to the Palestinian Authority [PA] began this afternoon. The Palestinian delegation is headed by Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, Minister of local government in the PA, and the Israeli side by Yo'el Singer, director of the legal department at the Israeli Foreign Ministry. This round is being held amid an atmosphere of pessimism about the usefulness of these negotiations in light of Israel's deliberate slowdown in discussing the topics on the agenda, following the failure of the negotiations between Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin at the Erez crossing point last week, and in view of Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres' presence in Paris early this week.

The 10th round of negotiations is aimed at finding points of agreement between the two sides on the "principles" of holding the legislative elections in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the conditions that must be met by the candidates and voters, and the powers of the elected legislative council. The Palestinian party is demanding that the legislative council have 100 members, including representatives of Arab Jerusalem, that the council should have big legislative powers, and that the various Palestinian groups have the opportunity to participate in the elections so that they will not oppose the peace agreement. The Israeli side wants the council to have only 25 members and not to include representatives of Jerusalem and for the Palestinian groups opposed to the Palestinian-Israeli agreements not to participate in the elections.

Palestinian Delegate on 'Deadlock'

JN2102165595 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 21 Feb 95

[Interview with Hasan 'Asfur, member of the Palestinian delegation to the talks with Israel on the legislative elections, by Fathi al-Barqawi on 21 February; place not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Barqawi] Brother Hasan 'Asfur, member of the Palestinian negotiating delegation. Good morning.

['Asfur] Good morning.

[Al-Barqawi] Do you expect anything from the talks that resumed today in light of the deadlock which they have reached?

['Asfur] Certainly, the return to the negotiations in light of the tension in the Palestinian-Israeli relations—particularly following the first Erez meeting between brother President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] and Yitzhaq Rabin which had negative effect on the entire peace process—would give momentum to the elections talks. This is possible in light of the Israeli agreement that was conveyed by Yitzhaq Rabin to brother President Abu-'Ammar and which was reiterated by the head of the Israeli delegation to the talks on elections on the principle of separating the election of the chairman of the authority from the election of the Palestinian council. This beginning would give a new basis for the negotiations on elections. Also, the Israeli side gave some signs that they are ready to make a serious progress toward formulating the agreement, particularly in the issues over which there are no essential differences, such as the principle of international supervision and completing the lists of voters and candidates, in accordance with the fact that all the Palestinian people will have the right to participate in the elections, except the racist and nondemocratic factions. We believe that there are no such factions among the Palestinian people. A new basis might emerge today.

[Al-Barqawi] Do you think that the PLO Executive Committee extraordinary meeting today, which comes after a long suspension, will have an effect on the meetings that started today?

['Asfur] The convening of the PLO Executive Committee now that the Palestinian Authority [PA] has been in power for a long time has become a political necessity. The objective of the meeting is to make a full review of the situation facing the PA, whether in terms of the negotiations, the implementation of the agreement, or the performance and moves of the PA on the ground. Consequently, the convening of the PLO Executive

Committee is a Palestinian national political need, because it is the point of reference for the PA. Therefore, the meeting is an important step in these circumstances. The timing also came in light of the crisis which we are facing in the negotiations. However, I believe that holding the talks on elections on this day is an indicator that the continuation of the talks might be a necessity for the Palestinian and Israeli sides. However, we will not continue the talks at any price. In light of what takes place today and tomorrow, we will reassess the talks and whether there is a need to continue the talks as they are now, or if they should be suspended.

[Al-Barqawi] Is there hope for reviving this process?

['Asfur] This is our hope. We are earnest in this matter and we are concerned about the continuation of the political process because this is the only option of both sides. However, we do not want to return to a war or cold war between the two sides. Things do not depend on one side. The other side is required to show the same desire, not only through speaking about illusions, promises, or slogans, but through the real and serious implementation of the Declaration of Principles, whether in terms of its implementation or spreading the spirit of this agreement. Recently, the Israeli side began to entrench the spirit of hostility and the concepts of war, particularly the plan of separation which was propagated recently. This plan does not spread the spirit of peace, but on the contrary, it deepens the spirit of hostility and war between the two sides.

[Al-Barqawi] Brother Hasan 'Asfur, thank you.

Israel Agrees to Supervision of Elections

TA2202120695 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 22 Feb 95 p 4

[Report by Ori Nir]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the improved atmosphere reached in the wake of an agreement on several points, the negotiations between Israel and Palestinian Authority reconvened in Cairo yesterday on the format for general elections for the self-rule council in the territories. The current two-day round of negotiations, which ends today, is meant to focus on several issues.

In reference to supervision over the elections, the Palestinians are demanding the deployment of hundreds of international observers in the territories and the establishment of an international committee of eight judges from various countries to make sure the elections are free and honest, which Israel does not oppose.

Another issue is the right of East Jerusalem residents to be elected to the autonomy council. Israel is prepared only to permit East Jerusalem inhabitants to vote for the council, but the Palestinians are demanding that they also be allowed to be elected. The only two restraints the Palestinians are prepared to impose on the candidates are that they do not present a racist or undemocratic platform.

Hasan 'Asfur, a member of the Palestinian delegation, told journalists last night that the Palestinian leadership believes that there are no Palestinian organizations or individuals in the territories that espouse either of those ideas. The negotiations over the elections, beginning with the current round, are meant to reach agreement on the draft of a joint accord on the election format.

Israelis, Palestinians Discuss Industrial Projects

TA2102170995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Finance Ministry director general David Brodet met today with Palestinian Authority [PA] representatives to discuss the establishment of industrial zones in the autonomy areas. Our economic affairs correspondent Menahem Friedman reports that it was agreed to speed up work on consolidating a joint proposal on the matter. Brodet clarified that his ministry and the Foreign Ministry are proposing that several such industrial zones be established, to include factories, services, and trade companies from Israel, the autonomy, and other countries. He noted that the intention is to enlist the international community's aid in financing the infrastructure in these zones.

Health Minister Efrayim Sne conferred with Riyad al-Za'nun, the person in charge of health in the autonomy, today and proposed the establishment of a joint medical center in the Erez area, to be financed by private investors. Israeli and Palestinian teams will work at the center and treat patients from the Gaza Strip and from Arab countries. Our correspondent 'Ofra Nehmad reports that Minister Sne has already discussed this with private investors, who showed interest in the project. Israeli and Palestinian representatives will meet next month in order to promote the idea.

Four-Way Ministerial Meeting on Refugees Postponed

JN2202092195 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 22 Feb 95 pp 1, 19

[FBIS Translated Text] A senior source yesterday told AL-ASWAQ that a meeting for the foreign ministers of Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, and Israel, which was slated for 26 February in Amman, was postponed until further notice at the request of the Israeli side.

The meeting was scheduled to discuss the issues of refugees and displaced persons in accordance with the Palestinian-Israeli agreements and the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty. The same source pointed out that the Israeli side proposed to Jordan, in its capacity as the hosting state, that the meeting be postponed until 4 March. The Jordanian Government, however, apologized because this date coincides with the 'Id al-Fitr holiday.

In another development, Arab League Secretary General 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid is expected in Amman on 26 February for talks with senior officials on the future of inter-Arab relations and the Arab League's role in achieving Arab reconciliation.

U.S. Claim to Mideast Neutrality 'Blatant Lie'

MM2202090295 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 17 Feb 95 p 15

[Article by 'Abd-al-Wahhab Badrakhan: "The United States and the Eternal Ally"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The least that can be said about the U.S. position on Israeli nuclear armament as stated by Warren Christopher is that it is irresponsible and lacks seriousness. In this Egyptian-Israeli conflict the United States is playing the same role as it is playing in the peace negotiations, which is "Israel first," including its security, interests, policy, past, future, and the hegemony that it is preparing to exercise. And "Arabs afterward," because their security and what they consider crucial to their security, their interests, and their future are not important. The strange and unrealistic thing about the U.S. position is that it does not change whether the issue is between two states which have established peace between them, Israel being one, or between Israel and any other Arab party.

From the angle of totality and principle the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty appears naturally to be a U.S. "priority." The United States is the only superpower. The other powers, including Europe, are not competing with it or disputing that position, but the exclusive superiority at the top of the world should not become an enlarged example of any individual monopoly of power, authority, and decision. Furthermore, planning for the future requires an equilibrium in the management of world affairs. So far there is no equilibrium between the attempts to ensure the success of the Middle East peace process and the ideas and policies proposed for the future of this region.

The day will soon come when Washington will have to take a clear and decisive stand on the question of Israeli nuclear armament. If what the Americans are now saying is the prelude to such a position, then the Arabs should no longer make up illusions and believe them. The United States supports Israel's nuclear armament program and, according to the foolish jargon used to perfection by official spokesmen, the United States considers that to be one of the factors which safeguard peace in the Middle East. In the other framework of multilateral or bilateral talks it is equally wily. The claim of "U.S. neutrality" is a blatant lie, because the U.S. emphasis on the importance and priority of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty requires a more responsible and serious U.S. attitude. The dispute is not just an Egyptian-Israeli dispute. It is an Arab-Israeli dispute, and even a "Middle East" dispute. The "gentle tone" of Shim'on Peres, "father" of the Israeli bomb, does not conceal its cunning and its aims.

Secretary Christopher did not say a word, not a single word, about Israel's refusal to sign that treaty or commit itself to it despite the fact that he is insisting that all states of the world should sign it with its amendments which make it "eternal." The silence here is suspect and incomprehensible, even unjustifiable. It is as if Washington is acknowledging that Israel has a right to an "eternal" refusal to sign the treaty. But Washington is prepared to talk all the time about Iranian nuclear armament, even though Iran is not rebelling against the international will, or about an Iraqi nuclear threat, the truth and long-term prospects of which the United States knows perfectly well.

The United States likes to be seen as organizing the world of the future—a task which any superpower is bound to undertake, especially if it is the sole superpower, but it is allowing itself to support chaos and disorder in the Middle East as long as that serves the interests of its strategic ally Israel. That is why the Egyptian president had every right to express anger, as he did yesterday, even though he aimed his sharp criticism at Israel for still refusing even to discuss its nuclear dispute with Egypt. If the threat is to all the Arab states and their neighbors, then why abandon support for Egypt in the confrontation? Is it because cowboy Christopher has threatened Washington's displeasure if "groups of states" agree to prevent the "eternal" renewal of the treaty?

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 14 Feb

NC1802190695

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 14 February edition of the Arabic-language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Al-Azhar Imam Says Terrorists Should Be Crucified or Exiled
2. Columnist Praises Minister al-Alfi's Attempt To Combat Corruption
3. The Immigrant Trial Continues
4. Spanish Convert to Islam Interviewed on Activities
5. Society Head Discusses Islamic Republics' Links With Turkey
6. Columnist Hopes Arabs Unite Over Treaty, Reject Israeli Power Role

AL-AZHAR IMAM SAYS TERRORISTS SHOULD BE CRUCIFIED OR EXILED

Page 3 features a 3,000-word report by Buthayna Zakariya and Hisham al-'Ajami on an open meeting between al-Azhar Shaykh Jad-al-Haq 'Ali Jad-al-Haq and the masses of Bani Suwayf who went there with a convoy for religious enlightenment organized by the

Awqaf Ministry during the month of Ramadan. The shaykh is cited discussing various religious, political, and social issues. Asked whether the divisions and explosions among Muslims worldwide are of their own making, he says: "What is happening to the Muslims now is their own doing." God, he notes, told the Muslims to derive their strength from unity, but they are not doing so. He says that divided, the Muslims have become a target of other power-hungry nations.

Asked about those who spread corruption and destruction in the country, he answers: "Those who are causing destruction in our country are khawarij [dissident outlawed sect in Islam] and enemies of the Islamic nation. Their punishment should be crucifixion or exile. This is an honest description of them." He defends the security men in their fight against the "khawarij" and notes that "they should not be left alone." He suggests: It is our duty as true Muslims to protect our religion.

On the role of the al-Azhar in the Islamic world and its stance on the khawarij, he enumerates all the contributions al-Azhar is making to various Islamic countries. He notes that al-Azhar's preachers go out to the provinces and guide the people there to the path of righteousness. Shaykh Jad-al-Haq says that, linguistically, "an extremist is equal to a criminal." Those who kill in the name of Islam, he adds, are criminals and we must call them by their right name. He says: The word extremism has been imported to occupy us. "Is it not clear that the extremists are coming from abroad, like their funds", he argues. We must use the word correctly, he maintains, but we cannot call them Muslims. He then discusses various religious issues pertaining to Ramadan.

In al-Sharqiyah Governorate the al-Azhar shaykh also met the masses and explained to them that Egyptian laws are not pre-Islamic, but they do not violate Islamic shari'ah. He maintains that individuals and families in Egypt should apply their own shari'ah. He states that the laws in Egypt protect the individual, but it is the individual who violates them. Asked about peace with the Jews, he says: "If good neighborliness means reconciliation with the Jews, then we should reconcile with them," because Prophet Muhammad decreed thus.

COLUMNIST PRAISES MINISTER AL-ALFI'S ATTEMPT TO COMBAT CORRUPTION

Basyuni al-Halawani, in his "With All Frankness" column on page 6, writes 500 words on "The 'Lucy' of Asyut and a Salute to the Police." He discusses the case of a woman in Asyut who seduced policemen in the governorate and extracted information from them. The column salutes the "honest and committed interior minister, Major General Hasan al-Alfi," who has ordered an investigation into the affair. Al-Halawani says: "Combating moral corruption is no less important than combating political or economic corruption. Moral corruption is the direct cause of all kinds of corruption we are suffering in all walks of life." He says he hopes that all the various departments will start a march of correction and combating corruption, and that the Police Department will become the example for this.

THE IMMIGRANT TRIAL CONTINUES

Page 18 carries a 400-word unattributed report on proceedings during the court case for the film "The Immigrant." The report says the judge decided to postpone the session until 15 February to give the lawyer a chance to translate the contract between Yusuf Shahin, the producer, and the French company that produced the film. The rest of the report details proceedings during the court case.

SPANISH CONVERT TO ISLAM INTERVIEWED ON ACTIVITIES

Page 20 carries a 5,000-word interview with 'Abd-al-Basit Abu-Dawud Antonio Romero, a Spanish musician who converted to Islam and set up an Islamic society to spread Islamic culture in Europe, by Musa al-Hal. He discusses how and why he converted to Islam, the conditions of Muslims in Spain, which he says are excellent, cooperation with the state, and other issues. He notes that his society is trying to revive the Islamic heritage and the Arabic language in Spain.

SOCIETY HEAD DISCUSSES ISLAMIC REPUBLICS' LINKS WITH TURKEY

Page 20 also carries a 600-word report by Jamal Salim on statements by the head of the Turkish Society for Political Science in which he discusses what he calls the international conspiracies with the Serbs on the Muslims of Bosnia, similarities between the Turks and Arabs, and competition between Iran and Turkey to control the newly independent Islamic republics of the CIS. He says he hopes Iran will not interfere in the affairs of these states, since their roots are basically Turkish.

COLUMNIST HOPES ARABS UNITE OVER TREATY, REJECT ISRAELI POWER ROLE

Page 24 carries the 600-word "A Call To Reason" column, which is continued on page 23. In it al-Sayyid 'Abd-al-Ra'uf discusses peace with Israel. He maintains that Jerusalem will remain a source of pain for the Arabs, the Muslims, and the Christians as long as it is under the Israeli grip and control. The rights of the Palestinian people to their land will also remain a legitimate demand of the Arabs, no matter how many concessions they make for peace with Israel. 'Abd-al-Ra'uf says he believes that demanding these rights for the Palestinian people is a logical response to the reality that ignoring these rights is a factor that could destroy the peace process. He claims that although Israel ignores the rights of others, it presses ahead with economic peace with the Arab parties, based on the notion that it is superior to the Arabs. It aspires to play a leading role in the region, the author states. He says he believes that what he calls Israel's delusion with power stems from external factors and Arab weakness; it is not an inherent Israeli strength. But, he continues, there remains hope that the Arabs do not accept this Israeli imposition of power, through their condition on signing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty's renewal only if Israel signs.

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 14 Feb

NC1902125595

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 14 February edition of the Arabic-language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. New Trade Union Law Seeks To Curb Islamic Trend
2. Columnist Views Government 'War' Against Islamists
3. Islamic Thinker on Shari'ah, Rights, Copts, al-'Ashmawi
4. U.S. Rights Report Cited, Government Reaction Criticized
5. Arab-NATO Cooperation Against Islamic Fundamentalism Viewed

NEW TRADE UNION LAW SEEKS TO CURB ISLAMIC TREND

The paper's main story and many of its leading articles deal with the government's endeavor to amend the trade union law to ensure tighter control on trade union elections. The bill was finally approved by the People's Assembly.

—A 1,000-word report by Khalid Yunus on pages 1 and 6 says the general conference of professional associations decided in its emergency meeting on 13 February to stage a strike "and to continue to protest the suspicious amendment of the law using legitimate means." The conference also decided to postpone the demonstration that was scheduled for 13 February until after a meeting between a trade union delegation and President Husni Mubarak.

The report says the general assemblies of the unions of doctors, engineers, pharmacists, and scientists described the bill as "a reversal from democracy, an attack on the freedom of trade union elections, and a conspiracy serving the Zionist enemy because the professional associations reject normalization with the enemy." The report cites those unions as saying that "there are agents seeking to turn Egypt into another Algeria." It says "thousands of trade union members" staged "silent" protests in front of the People's Assembly to declare their rejection of the bill. The report adds that the general assemblies of the professional associations viewed the proposed amendments to the law as "the beginning of the government's effort to rig the numerous elections planned for 1995 to exclude the Islamic trend from all elected representative councils."

—Page 3 is fully devoted to reports on the development of the "crisis" between the government and the professional associations under the banner headline: "The Professional Associations Are in a Rage: Large-Scale Strikes and Sit-ins to Protest the Vicious Onslaught by the Government". The reports detail meetings of some associations' general assemblies and cite doyens and speakers by criticizing the government measure as undemocratic interference in trade union affairs. In an approximately 2,000-word report by Khalid Yunus, Dr. Mahmud 'Abd-al-Maqsud, secretary general of the Federation of Medical Professions Unions, is cited as saying that "those who will vote for suspicious laws and amendments in the People's Assembly will be blacklisted; every trade unionist will serve as a forum to expose these people, who are the product of the communities of drugs, deception, and fraud."

—A 1,000-word report by 'Abd-al-Fattah Fayid and Ashraf Khalil on pages 1 and 6 describes how the People's Assembly passed the proposed amendment to the trade union law. It begins: "In a flagrant defiance of the will of the trade unionists, the People's Assembly, suddenly and without discussion, approved the restrictions imposed by the government on professional associations through the so-called amendments to Law 100 of 1993. The approval was given pursuant to strict party instructions with which everybody complied." The report cites some deputies as condemning the "hasty" passage of the law. Deputy Rif'at Bashir is cited as telling his fellow deputies in the People's Assembly that the amendments "destroy professional associations and are aimed at excluding a certain political trend." The report also says that pro-government deputy Muhammad Juwayli "launched a vicious attack on the Islamic trend at the professional associations and announced that the real aim of the draft law is to prevent the Islamic trend from winning elections, even free elections."

—A 700-word report by Salah al-Nahif on pages 1 and 6 says that Labor Party Leader Ibrahim Shukri, in a seminar in Tanta, "condemned the government's amendment of the professional associations law without consulting the concerned people. He said the aim is to tighten government control on these democratic establishments." Shukri reportedly stressed that "the professional associations play an important national role and serve the interests of the nation, adding that it is not in the interest of the country to deal a blow to them and undermine their role."

—An 800-word article by Dr. Muhammad Hilmi Murad on pages 1 and 6 explains the "flaws" of the trade union bill which make it unconstitutional, as he says. Murad notes that the bill was not referred to the Consultative Council or to the Judicial Council, and he criticizes the "hasty" issuance and discussion of the bill.

—A 3,000-word article by Chief Editor Majdi Ahmad Husayn on page 2 also discusses "the new brute onslaught against professional associations" as a wave to restrict freedoms. "It will be followed by more severe waves if the national and popular forces fail to demonstrate a firm and solid position to beat off this new aggression," he says. He says the government seeks to "tamper with" trade union elections. He concludes: "The will of the nation must unite to turn the table over against the corrupt and the enemies of freedom. Let the battle for the independence of trade unions be the beginning of an unending activity until we eradicate despotism and build the authority of justice, the authority of the people."

—A 1,500-word article by 'Abd-al-Mun'im Salim Jibarah on page 5 defends professional associations and their national role and attacks the government for issuing laws that would "paralyze trade union activity." He says the government and the ruling party want to impose their authority through "forgery," the use of the "iron fist" against their opponents, and the passing of laws that serve their own purposes. He concludes by stressing that the issue is not one of trade unions, but of democracy and freedoms.

COLUMNIST VIEWS GOVERNMENT 'WAR' AGAINST ISLAMISTS

In a 600-word article on page 12, columnist Muhammad 'Abd-al-Quddus sees various kinds of "state violence," such as torture, arrests, restrictions on freedoms, and the government "war" against the Islamic trend. The writer begins by saying that the arrest of Dr. 'Isam al-'Aryan, a leading trade unionist and Muslim Brotherhood figure, is "unacceptable terrorism by the ruling regime."

'Abd-al-Quddus writes: "The war that the Mubarak regime is waging against the Islamic trend in general, and the Muslim Brotherhood and the Labor Party in particular, has its known reasons. This year various elections will be held, whether at the level of the professional associations or the People's Assembly. The Islamic trend is the regime's primary rival in these elections." He maintains that the Islamic trend "proved its popularity in the street and won the support of the youth," and this is why the regime is trying to "deal police blows" to it. 'Abd-al-Quddus says the regime has on many occasions demonstrated its "flagrant enmity" toward religious practices, such as expelling female television presenters who wear head cover and rejecting the appointment of ambassadors abroad if their wives adhere to the Islamic dress code.

The writer adds: "Peace and normal relations with the Zionist enemy require that the Islamic trend be pursued because it is the main opponent of this normalization. It should be noted that there are close links between Hamas [the Islamic Resistance Movement], which practices jihad in Palestine, and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Oppression against the Muslim Brotherhood, therefore, is a great service our rulers are rendering to the Zionists."

The writer finally refers to the NATO secretary general's remark that Islamic fundamentalism replaced Communism as a threat to the West, and his offer to support the countries that fight this threat, including Egypt. The writer comments: "I leave it to the reader to judge what kind of regime is controlling the people of Egypt."

ISLAMIC THINKER ON SHARI'AH, RIGHTS, COPTS, AL-'ASHMAWI

In an approximately 2,000-word article on page 10, Tariq 'Abd-al-Hamid reports on a news conference held by Islamic thinker Dr. Muhammad 'Amarah with foreign journalists in Egypt. 'Amarah is cited as saying that Muslims do not seek a conflict with other cultures and civilizations but want to keep their own cultural identity. He says the current "Islamic awakening" in the Middle East seeks to establish an Islamic system where the Islamic law, not the Napoleonic code, is applied.

Dr. 'Amarah discusses Egypt's Coptic Christians, saying they are not a minority but part of the nation, and the difference in religion is not a problem. He stresses that Islam ensures religious freedoms of minorities and says that Copts can form their own party, but they do not want to do that because such a party will isolate them. 'Amarah asserts that Islam respects human rights more than the West does. Such rights in Islam are a "divine duty, he says.

Finally, 'Amarah denies that he or al-Azhar have accused Counselor Muhammad Sa'id al-'Ashmawi of apostacy. "I challenge al-'Ashmawi to present a single word in which I said he departed from religion; it is God alone who judges people's creed. I am not a mufti, and we do not have priesthood in Islam."

U.S. RIGHTS REPORT CITED, GOVERNMENT REACTION CRITICIZED

The paper publishes on page 7 the approximately 4,000-word "second and last part" of the U.S. State Department report on human rights in Egypt.

—In a 2,500-word article on page 5, Dr. Muhammad Hilmi Murad partly discusses the U.S. report on human rights in Egypt and the reaction to it by Egyptian officials. He cites several points in the report on the death of detainees, continuing arrests, and military trials of civilians. He notes that the interior minister and his assistants denied the contents of the American report but says this denial was hasty and not objective. He says the government should investigate the incidents mentioned in the report and present all facts to the public instead of blindly defending security practices.

ARAB-NATO COOPERATION AGAINST ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM VIEWED

A 900-word report by 'Abd-al-Sattar Abu-Husayn on pages 1 and 6 views Arab-NATO cooperation to combat Islamic fundamentalism. The writer says Egypt's participation in this cooperation threatens the country's independence and affiliation.

—In a 600-word article on page 8, columnist Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah discusses the statements of the NATO secretary general in which he saw a threat to the West from Islamic fundamentalism. The writer says that "Western hostility toward Arabs and Muslims exists in the European and American mentality." He cites some Western movies and notes some Western press stories and textbooks to support his claim. He concludes: "Hostility to Islam is clear and needs no evidence. Both the Western and Eastern (formerly communist) worlds have once again joined forces against the Muslim south in a new crusade after they realized that the Islamic awakening is sweeping all Arab and Islamic countries." The writer hopes the Arab governments will not play a role in the NATO scheme.

Palestinian Affairs

PLO Executive Committee Begins Meeting in Cairo

Peace Process Developments on Agenda

NC2102184995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1815 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Feb (MENA)—The meetings of the PLO Executive Committee began in Cairo this evening under the chairmanship of Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, who arrived in Cairo earlier today.

'Arafat spokesman Nabil Abu-Rudaynah said that the discussions will deal with Palestinian developments in light of Israel's intransigent position and its refusal to implement the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles.

Palestinian sources in Cairo told MENA that the conferees will also discuss the economic situation in the Palestinian territory in light of Israel's blockade of the Palestinian people and the donor states' failure to provide the promised financial aid to the Palestinian Authority.

Nabil Abu-Rudaynah confirmed that a statement about the PLO Executive Committee meeting will be issued when the meeting is concluded, noting that he expects this to happen at a late hour tonight.

The Palestinian spokesman declined to reveal how many Executive Committee members are attending today's meeting.

It should be noted that six Executive Committee members have suspended their membership to protest the PLO's signing of the Oslo Agreement with Israel. They include 'Abdallah al-Hurani, Shafiq al-Hut, Mahmud Darwish, and the representatives of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Arab Liberation Front.

'Abd-Rabbuh: Suspension of Talks Possible

JN2102193195 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1830 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The PLO Executive Committee began its meetings in Cairo this evening under the chairmanship of His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat to discuss and assess the peace process.

Culture Minister Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh said that suspending the talks with Israel is one of the topics on the Executive Committee's agenda this evening. Hasan 'Asfur, member of the Palestinian delegation to the Cairo talks, ruled out any decision by the PLO Executive Committee to stop the talks with Israel because this conflicts with the interest of the Palestinian people. [passage omitted]

[In a related story, Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic reported within its news headlines at 1900 GMT that Faruq Qaddumi, chief of the PLO Political Department, and Sulayman al-Najjab, leader of the Palestinian People's Party, have boycotted the meeting.]

Source Says Meeting Legal; Quorum Obtained

NC2102212795 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2045 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Feb (MENA)—A Palestinian source has stressed that the meeting of the PLO Executive Committee in Cairo this evening is legal because a quorum has been obtained. The source said two-thirds of the Executive Committee members attended the meeting, in addition to the Committee's chairman, Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat.

The source said those who resigned from the Committee, suspended their membership, or were absent are not calculated for the purpose of the quorum. Therefore, the source added, the Committee can meet if two-thirds of its members attend, and this is what happened today.

The source said that four members are absent from the meeting although they were invited. They are PLO Political Department Chief Faruq Qaddumi, Mahmud 'Abbas, Palestinian People's Party leader Sulayman al-Najjab, and Popular Struggle Front representative Mahmud Isma'il.

The source noted that two members, Mahmud Darwish and Shafiq al- Hut, had resigned from the Committee, and that the representatives of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Arab Liberation Front, and [independent] member 'Abdallah Hurani had suspended their membership.

It should be noted that the Committee comprised 18 members before these developments.

The Palestinian sources said that the Executive Committee is expected to issue a statement later tonight.

Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat held an Iftar banquet for the Committee members today.

'Arafat is expected to meet with President Husni Mubarak tomorrow to inform him of the results of the Committee meeting and of the results of his recent meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and his Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres.

'Arafat will also meet with Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa to discuss Palestinian-Egyptian relations.

Officials Comment at End of Meetings

NC2202084895 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2320 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Feb (MENA)—PLO Executive Committee meetings chaired by Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, which lasted five and a half hours, were concluded tonight.

Committee member Yasir 'Amr said an official statement will be released on Wednesday [22 February] on the committee meetings' outcome. He said the delegates discussed all the reports on the negotiations, the Palestinian Authority's situation, and Israel's continuing procrastination over implementing the Palestinian-Israeli accord.

PLO Executive Committee member 'Amr said the committee will remain in permanent session, that a meeting could be held in Tunis after the 'Id al-Fitr holiday, and that this might be followed by a meeting of the Central Committee.

He added that many Palestinian envoys will leave for various countries and that a move will be made on Arab and international levels to clarify the Palestinian position.

He said: We demand that Israel commit itself to implementing the provisions of the Palestinian-Israeli accord and that the reference always be to Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. We refuse the disruption of what has been agreed upon under the pretext of Israel's security.

He announced that President 'Arafat will meet President Husni Mubarak tomorrow and will then leave for Saudi Arabia for talks with the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, on the Palestinian situation, to rally support for the Palestinian stance, and to seek a united Arab stance.

Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, minister of information in the Palestinian Authority, said the delegates discussed developments in the political process over the past few months and the real deadlock it has reached, for which the Israeli Government bears full responsibility.

He added that there are important steps and measures that have been agreed upon and that there are other measures to be implemented. He noted that the committee will resume its meetings tomorrow after President Husni Mubarak's meeting with President 'Arafat to discuss the statement that will be released.

Executive Committee member Muhammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi said the Palestinian side will implement other measures in light of the outcome of the next Palestinian diplomatic move.

He added that a meeting will be held after this round of visits to be made by the Palestinian envoys to Arab and foreign countries and that another meeting will be held between the National Authority and the Executive Committee.

He denied that progress has been made in the current Palestinian-Israeli talks, noting that Israel uses the talks to claim that there is progress and that a climate of peace exists.

He said there is no danger for Israel's security, adding: We are not responsible for the security of individuals in Israel and we do not accept Israel's use of the security issue as a pretext for not complying with the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles.

As for recent acts of violence, he said that some Israeli individuals came under attacks but these operations do not threaten Israel's security.

Al-Nashashibi said Israel's announcement of approving the entry of 10,000 Palestinian workers to Israel is just an attempt to show that it responds to some Palestinian demands. He said Israel knows that the economic crisis leads to more violence.

He stressed that Israel's building of settlements around Jerusalem represents noncommitment to the peace accord.

He denied that it is the Palestinian Authority's intention to unilaterally halt negotiations with Israel. He noted that no differences in views between the participants emerged in today's discussions of the Executive Committee, pointing out that the quorum of nine members in addition to President 'Arafat was legal.

He said the National Authority will work toward unifying the Palestinian fold, as it will hold contacts with various Palestinian factions within the PLO, factions that have frozen their membership of the Executive Committee, and with Palestinian organizations outside the committee.

He said: We will embark on a dialogue with all Palestinian factions in and outside the PLO to bring views closer and unify the Palestinian rank.

Decision To Pursue Talks With Israel Reported

JN2202062295 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The PLO has decided to continue the peace talks with Israel. The decision was made at a meeting in Cairo last night under the chairmanship of President Yasir 'Arafat. PLO Executive Committee member Muhammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi told reporters: We will not suspend negotiations, but we want to clearly define what their topics should be. We cannot continue to negotiate whatever the Israelis put on the agenda. Al-Nashashibi, who is the National Authority's finance minister, added that the PLO will send envoys, particularly to the United States, Russia, Japan, China, and the EU on a diplomatic mission to draw attention and explain the PLO's position.

Al-Nashashibi said: We do not want the international community to intervene; we only seek its solidarity. We want to clearly tell the world that the Israelis are the ones who are really responsible for the stalemate and the ones who are leading the negotiations to a dead end. He added: We want to clearly explain to the world the real obstacles preventing the establishment of a comprehensive peace. He recalled the intransigent Israeli positions and the Israeli procrastination on the issues of the Israeli Army redeployment in the occupied West Bank, the settlement activity, elections, Jerusalem, and refugees.

The PLO Executive Committee is expected to resume its meetings today. It is also expected to issue a statement explaining its position.

Committee Calls For Arab Summit

NC2202103395 Paris AFP in English 1028 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Feb 22 (AFP)—The PLO called here Wednesday [22 February] for an Arab summit to tackle the "stagnation" in the peace process with Israel.

The PLO executive committee said it was "important to examine the stagnation in the peace process at an Arab meeting of the highest level and as quickly as possible," the committee said after an urgent meeting.

Arab Meeting, Not League Summit Said Urged

NC2202132995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1250 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 22 Feb (MENA)—Muhammad Zuhdi al- Nashashibi, a member of the PLO Executive Committee and minister of finance in the Palestinian Authority, has denied that the final statement of the Executive Committee meeting called for an emergency Arab summit within the Arab League, contrary to a news agency report.

He told MENA that the statement called for an Arab meeting on the highest level within the framework of the Arab League. He explained that this means a meeting of Arab foreign ministers, not an Arab summit.

The statement's paragraph on this point confused reporters covering the Executive Committee meeting. A foreign news agency said in an urgent report that the statement called for an emergency Arab summit within the Arab League.

PLO Executive Committee Statement

NC2202120095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1155 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 22 Feb (MENA)—The PLO Executive Committee has announced that obstructing the implementation of the basic aspects regarding the redeployment of the Israeli forces and obstructing elections threatens the Palestinian-Israeli accord with collapse and leads the peace process to an impasse.

In a statement issued following its meetings under Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat in Cairo today, the PLO Executive Committee warned against Israel's continuing building of settlements in the occupied territories, its changing the character of Jerusalem, and its confiscating land. It said that such measures obstruct peace in the region in accordance with the UN resolutions.

The PLO Executive Committee blamed the Israeli Government for the impasse reached in the talks between the two sides.

In its statement the PLO Executive Committee said that the Declaration of Principles is intact, a complete package, and that any attempt to separate its parts or obstruct the implementation of the remaining basic aspects regarding the redeployment of the Israeli forces and the holding of the elections threatens the whole agreement with collapse and leads the peace process to an impasse.

The PLO Executive Committee said that the continuing settlement activity in the Palestinian territories—including Jerusalem and the surrounding areas—and the isolation and Judaization of Jerusalem constitute a flagrant breach of all the pledges that have accompanied the peace process, pledges the aim of which is clear, namely, ending the occupation on the basis of land for peace and the implementation of the UN resolutions, particularly Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which formed the basis for the Madrid Conference.

The PLO Executive Committee said that Israel's changing the character of Jerusalem obstructs all the historic opportunities for a settlement and hinders a just and comprehensive peace between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, something for which the Israeli Government is responsible at this decisive historic time.

In its statement the PLO Executive Committee stated that the release of detainees and prisoners is a basic element of the Palestinian-Israeli agreements. It called for giving this issue top priority within the framework of the implementation of the agreements and pledges, including those reached by the Joint Higher Committee on Detainees, the work of which the Israeli Government has obstructed.

The PLO Executive Committee said that the impasse in the talks stems from a planned and deliberate move by the Israeli Government, which has used various pretexts since the signing of the Declaration of Principles to obstruct the implementation of this agreement. It added that at a time when the PLO Executive Committee does not belittle the importance of providing security for the two sides, as stipulated in the agreements and within the framework of the responsibility of each side, the Palestinian National Authority [PA] has exerted its utmost efforts in this connection, as dictated by its obligations, and will continue to work in this direction.

The Executive Committee emphasized in its statement that the policy of the closure, embargo, mass punishment, paralyzing of Palestinian economic life, and the deliberate obstruction of economic ties with sister Egypt, Jordan, and all fraternal Arab and world states is not related with the alleged prerequisites of Israel's security. This policy threatens more tension and an explosive situation for which the Israeli Government takes full responsibility.

The statement stressed that under these conditions the peace process has started to run around in an alarmingly vicious circle, losing its credibility and its ability to continue. The Executive Committee launched urgent contacts with the brothers in Egypt, contacts that included the meeting this morning between President Husni Mubarak and the Executive Committee members to discuss the situation from its various aspects. The contacts also include the upcoming meeting between his majesty the custodian of the two holy mosques and brother Yasir 'Arafat, the meeting in Tunis with President 'Ali Zine el Abidine, and other meetings with King Hassan II of Morocco, King Husayn of Jordan, and many other Arab leaders and presidents.

The statement said that the Executive Committee sees a need for discussing the consequences and risks involved in the collapse of the peace process within the framework of an Arab meeting on the highest level within the Arab League as soon as possible.

It pointed out that the Executive Committee is undertaking immediate contacts with the peace process sponsors in Russia, the United States, the EU, Norway, China, Japan, the OIC, and the nonaligned group, in addition to the UN Security Council.

The Executive Committee stressed the need to activate the various PLO establishments and prepare for a PNC meeting soon.

The Executive Committee decided to set up a committee chaired by Chairman Yasir 'Arafat and the membership of the Executive Committee and PA members to initiate an all-embracing national dialogue with the Palestinian powers, figures, and personalities to enhance national unity and the common denominators and eventually protect our national achievements and face the risks threatening our nation's fate in a responsible and fraternal spirit.

The statement added that in view of the seriousness of the situation and the fateful stances and decisions it requires, the Executive Committee has decided to keep an open and constant session and to hold a meeting in Tunis after the 'Id al-Fitr holiday. The Committee will keep up its work and bear its national responsibility in line with its competence as the higher legitimate leadership of the PLO to realize our sacred goal of returning and exercising the right to self-determination and to an independent Palestinian state with its capital Jerusalem.

Concluding its statement, the PLO Executive Committee expressed gratitude to sister Egypt, President Husni Mubarak, and the Egyptian Government for their firm support of the Palestinian people and their lawful rights as well as of the march toward a just peace. It thanked Egypt for hosting the PLO Executive Committee meeting.

The PLO Executive Committee meeting is the first to be held in Cairo since 1977.

'Arafat To Meet With Mubarak, Leave for Pilgrimage

JN2202055395 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat and PLO Executive Committee members will meet with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Cairo today. Announcing this, Palestinian Ambassador in Cairo Zuhdi al-Qidrah added that President Yasir 'Arafat will leave Cairo for Saudi Arabia for minor pilgrimage.

Hamas Leaflet Condemns PA Arrests, Warns of Civil War

TA1802151695 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 18 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in the Gaza Strip has again warned Yasir 'Arafat about the danger of a civil war. In a leaflet distributed over the weekend, Hamas claims that the Palestinian Authority [PA] is carrying out arrests and preventing 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam, Hamas' military arm, from acting. Our correspondent notes that the leaflet is written in an extremely virulent manner and is especially directed against the new military court established by 'Arafat in Gaza.

Security Forces Arrest 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Leader

TA1902054495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 19 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In the Gaza Strip, Palestinian security forces have arrested Yasir Husayn, a leader of 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam, the military wing of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], and two of his aides. Security sources say Husayn participated in several terrorist attacks against Israelis. He was carrying a machine gun and a pistol when he was arrested.

Fatah Hawks Warn Hamas Not To Strike at Security Men

TA1902095095 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 19 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] This morning, the Gaza Strip Fatah Hawks issued a statement warning the Hamas

[Islamic Resistance Movement] military arm against perpetrating terror attacks against members of the Palestinian security services. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the warning came in reaction to Hamas threats to harm the Palestinian intelligence organization, headed by General Musa 'Arafat, in the wake of the organization's arrest of several activists belonging to the Hamas military arm over the weekend. Sources in the Strip said that the warning was issued on Yasir 'Arafat's instruction.

Security Service Forms Open-Source Collection Unit

TA1802195495 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 18 Feb 95

[Report by Yoram Binur]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Palestinian security service has recently established a new unit tasked with gathering information on Israel. The heads of the new unit are senior Fatah officials who have been incarcerated in Israel in the past. The model for the new unit is the Hatzav unit of the IDF Intelligence Branch, a unit that gathers information on the enemy from open sources. Our correspondent Yoram Binur brings us an unusual picture on the inner workings of the Palestinian security service:

[Begin Binur recording] The Palestinian security service is operating a new unit in the 'Aqabat Jabr refugee camp south of Jericho. The new unit has adopted a modus operandi similar to the IDF Intelligence Branch. [passage omitted]

The new unit dealing with Israeli affairs established by Jibril al-Rujub, head of the Palestinian security service in Jericho, does not deal with real espionage. Just like their counterparts in the IDF Intelligence Branch's Hatzav unit, the Palestinian unit members are busy gathering information on Israel from open sources such as the written press and the electronic media. Intelligence experts say that quite a lot can be learned about enemies or neighbors in this manner. [passage omitted]

The unit issues a daily report dubbed Jerusalem Is Ours. Most of the material is security related, but other issues such as the memorial service held for Barukh Goldstein last week are also included. The report is submitted to Yasir 'Arafat, the Palestinian ministers, and the senior officers. Most of the information is of an open nature, but the report itself is defined as restricted. When Palestinian policemen saw the reports in our hands, they immediately took them away from us.

This unit is the tip of the iceberg of the widespread Palestinian security apparatus already operating in the West Bank. Israeli security sources hope that Jibril al-Rujub's men are just as efficient in gathering information about the activities of the extremist Muslim organizations in the territories. [end recording]

Orient House Warns Against Closure of Institutions

JN1802153095 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 18 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible source at Orient House has denounced the continued Israeli campaign against Palestinian institutions in the occupied Arab Jerusalem.

The Orient House spokesman said this campaign is designed to prepare the atmosphere for taking measures against several Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem for political reasons.

Hatim 'Abd-al-Qadir rebutted the Israeli authorities claims that these institutions carry out the work of the Palestinian Authority. He said Orient House was and is the headquarters of the Palestinian delegation to the peace negotiations, and that Orient House was carrying out its activities before the Oslo agreement and that it will continue to do so because these activities directly serve the peace process.

'Abd-al-Qadir warned against the Israeli authorities taking any measures against the Palestinian institutions in the holy city.

Palestinian Envoy Backs Egyptian Stance on NPT

NC1802152395 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1410 GMT 18 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Feb (MENA)—Palestine National Council Secretary Muhammad Subayh has said that Israel is currently creating crises with neighboring Arab states to evade its commitments in the Oslo agreement and cover up the weakness of Yitzhaq Rabin's government toward the domestic situation.

Subayh told MENA that the best evidence of this can be found in the attack Israel is mounting against the Egyptian Foreign Ministry because of the clear stand Egypt is assuming on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] and its emphasis on the need for Israel to join that treaty.

Subayh, who is also Palestine's permanent delegate to the Arab League, reiterated that he fully supports the Egyptian call for eliminating weapons of mass destruction from the region and for consolidating the peace process on the basis of international resolutions and the Oslo Agreement.

The Palestinian official pointed out that Arab public opinion is worried about Israel's possession of nuclear weapons, which undermines the region's future politically and threatens the citizens' lives.

He maintained that Rabin's government is encountering numerous domestic problems, particularly after the Shas Movement's withdrawal from the coalition with the Labor Party, the faltering relations between the government and the military establishment, and the expanding rightist movement. It is therefore trying to cover its powerlessness by procrastinating in the peace process and eluding its earlier commitments concerning the date of the Palestinian legislative elections and the redeployment of troops outside Palestinian cities and towns, he said.

Subayh added that the violent eruptions in the occupied West Bank are a normal reaction to Israel's procrastination and sluggishness in implementing the Oslo Agreement and its attempt to harvest the fruits of peace without complying with its requirements.

Algeria

Police Disperse Berber Language Demonstration

LD2102140995 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The demonstration in Algeria by students demanding recognition of the Berber language which was banned by authorities was dispersed by the police outside Algiers central university at noon today.

Students from other universities in the capital were prevented from joining the demonstration which was supposed to march to the Place des Martyrs, one kilometer away.

Several identity checks were carried out among the demonstrators by the security forces deployed around the central university early this morning.

Another demonstration with an identical slogan is scheduled to take place in the center of Algiers next Thursday.

Security Services Kill 8 'Criminals'

LD2102173295 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In the security sphere, a statement by the security services says today that the security services have killed eight criminals during search operations in the central and eastern parts of the country.

The same operations brought about the recovery of a quantity of weapons.

Four Guards Killed in Mutiny at Rehabilitation Center

LD2202083095 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0700 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement by the Justice Ministry says that a rebellion took place at Serkadji rehabilitation institution in the capital, Algiers, early yesterday morning by a group of prisoners implicated in cases of violating state security.

The statement pointed out that immediately after they started their rebellion, those involved detained six guards, whereupon they assassinated four of them, and injured the fifth. They also detained other prisoners.

The statement said that immediately after the incident, a crisis cell was formed to deal with the situation and to carry out security measures to calm down the situation and return the condition to normal.

After the security of the institution was threatened, the security services intervened to stop the rebellion. Work in this respect continues.

In conclusion, the statement said that another statement will be issued in due course to give the details of the incident.

Zeroual Meets National Figures To Review Electoral Law

LD1902211595 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 19 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The head of state, Liamine Zeroual, received at the presidency today Tidjani Haddam, Khaled Nezzar, and Mouloud Hamrouche.

These receptions fall within the framework of the consultations connected with reviewing the electoral law and the political aspects related to the elections.

Justice Minister Confirms Abolition of Special Courts

LD1802155495 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 18 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Algerian justice minister announced today, Saturday, that the three special courts responsible for trying cases of so-called terrorism or subversion are to be abolished. Perhaps this decision is a move toward greater calm in this country, Jerome Bastion reports:

[Bastion] Yes, in an interview published today by the government daily EL MOUDJAHID, Mohamed Teguia announces that so- called terrorist or subversive acts will henceforth be tried by the appropriate criminal or magistrate's court. This decision, the minister goes on to say, follows in the wake of the adoption of amendments to the penal code and the penal procedure code by the Transitional National Council [CNT], the temporary legislative body.

This same body, the CNT, has also approved a series of clemency measures regarding armed Islamists who repent for their actions; in particular, they will be spared the death penalty. These two measures, which opposition parties have been pressing for, are just the kind of thing that could loosen up political debate, insofar as it exists. It is worth mentioning that the death penalty has been suspended for the past 16 months and that, of 666 death sentences handed down in the last three years, two thirds were in absentia and only 20 have been carried out.

No date has been announced for the abolition of the three courts, in Algiers, Oran, and Constantine, but the most serious limitation to these attempts to calm the situation is still, of course, the continuation of armed conflict and of assassinations.

Government Proceeding With Privatization Efforts

LD1902142595 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 19 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The government has now started consultations with the social partners over the draft law concerning privatization of public enterprises. The start of these consultations has coincided with the approach of the date of the concluding of a second agreement with the International Monetary Fund, and this means that the Algerian Government intends to fully carry out the recommendations of the ad hoc international monetary bodies. Details are in this report prepared by Ahmed Souhou:

[Souhou] Informed sources have affirmed that a privatization ministry will be set up by the end of March next in order to deal with privatization operations. According to the document presented by the Ministry of Industrial restructuring, privatization will be introduced in three forms: partial or full privatization of public property, privatization of administrative management and privatization of public services.

The draft law carries lists of enterprises liable to be privatized, a timetable for privatization and the bodies in charge of assessing public enterprises's assets. The draft law also defines the criteria required from those who want to buy public enterprises, and also the ways of relinquishing the latter either through the selling of shares or through workers' participation in the capital of these enterprises.

The project does not rule out the possibility for workers and cadres to participate in the capital of their enterprises in order to preserve production instruments and good management. This is a demand made by the general union of Algerian workers. Pending this, there are objective difficulties likely to impede the march of this move, most important of which is the union's sticking to its position rejecting any relinquishing of the public sector, as well as the absence of a financial market and a stock exchange to fix the value of the shares that would be offered for sale, in addition to the deterioration of the financial structure of public enterprises. The other difficulty is the fear over the possibility of the transfer of public monopolies to private ones. But Prime Minister Sifi said two months ago in Club des Pins that a central committee would be set up to follow up the privatization process so that it may take place in a climate of transference and justice during the distribution to various private partners.

Committee To Inspect Privatization Installed

LD2002235595 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 20 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The committee in charge of inspecting and supervising privatization operations, established within the framework of Articles 24 and 25 of the 1994 supplementary financial bill, was installed today. Mourad Benachenhou, industrial restructuring and partnership minister, presided over the installment.

According to a ministry statement, the committee's role is to watch over the transparency rules, and to preserve the interest of the state and the communities. [passage omitted]

Economic Exhibition Promotion Accord Signed in Rome

LD1802091895 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0700 GMT 18 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Safex, the Algerian association of fairs and exports, and the Arab-Italian consultations company of the Arab-Italian Chamber of Commerce signed an agreement in Rome yesterday to promote economic events in both countries.

The agreement was signed by Sadek Keramane, chairman of the Algerian association, and the head of the Arab-Italian Chamber of Commerce.

According to the provisions of the agreement, the Arab-Italian Chamber of Commerce is to promote the participation of Italian enterprises in the economic events organized by the association of fairs and exports in Algeria. Both sides must organize a special fair in Algeria for products manufactured in Italy and encourage the Algerian enterprises to participate in fairs and exhibitions organized in Italy.

Egypt

Musa Reiterates Stand on NPT in Interview

JN2102201295 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 19 Feb 95 p 5

[Interview with Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa by Randah Taqiy-al-Din in Paris on 18 February]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Taqiy-al-Din] A poisonous climate is prevailing in the region as a result of the deteriorating Israeli-Egyptian ties. Would you please explain to us the possible consequences of this climate, and how can this row be settled?

[Musa] The contentious issue does not concern the signing of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT], but rather the Israeli nuclear program. The existence of this program will step up tension and the arms race in the region, not to mention the destabilization of regional security that is entailed. Hence, this issue, whose technical, security, and political implications are being dealt with by us with great firmness in our talks with the Israelis, must be settled. Likewise, we have raised this issue with the Americans and French. The world order cannot be sustained without the enforcement of a set of restraints and controls. Such a thing is unacceptable to us. The assumption that Israel could be excluded from the rules that apply to other states is unacceptable. If the regional state of affairs remains unchanged, it cannot breed stability.

[Taqiy-al-Din] You have spoken of controls that could be imposed on Israel. What are these controls?

[Musa] There are numerous frameworks for doing so. The NPT provides a comprehensive and necessary framework for doing so. There is another interconnected framework that could lead to such a thing; namely, the establishment of a region free of mass destruction weapons. Negotiations to establish such a region are bound to create a regional order that must, at a certain point, be linked to the world order. What is important is that either one of these two frameworks is deemed necessary at present. Barring this, we cannot say that progress will be made.

[Taqiy-al-Din] What about the outcome of the meeting you held with Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, who has made stringent statements to us on the NPT?

[Musa] Our position has remained unchanged. We have relayed this position to French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe, and earlier to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Likewise, we have communicated this position to the German authorities, and to other states that are concerned with this issue. Peres still believes that the immediate joining of the NPT by Israel is out of the question. Nonetheless, he has expressed a willingness to consider the various technical, political, and legal points we have raised. This means that the Israelis have begun to realize that the issue cannot be dismissed out of hand, that it concerns regional security, and that Egypt's position in this regard is firm. The Israeli position has not undergone a substantive change. However, Israel is now well aware of the firm Arab position in this regard.

[Taqiy-al-Din] In case Israel's examination of these points is not completed by the time the NPT is renewed in April, will Egypt sign the NPT?

[Musa] Unless the Israelis somehow sign the NPT, we will refuse to sign the treaty in April. This will remain our position as long as the Israeli position remains unchanged.

[Taqiy-al-Din] Will this affect your relationship with the United States?

[Musa] The United States views the issue from a narrow angle. We in Egypt are eager to safeguard our ties with the Americans. However, this eagerness must be reciprocated by the Americans. Moreover, this eagerness to safeguard these relations on our part does not prevent us from taking the position that we deem appropriate when the issue at stake concerns pan-Arab security.

[Taqiy-al-Din] Regarding the peace process, can we say that despite a decision not to continue the closure of Gaza, Egypt's relations with the United States and the Israelis do allow it to do anything to ease the current crisis?

[Musa] This is not true. Our relations with Washington, or any other bilateral relations will not change our stand and will not prevent us from expressing that stand in the way we want. During the Washington conference, our position was very clear. The talks focused on the land-for-peace principle as a final solution, although the Israelis, and possibly the Americans, were trying to avoid it. But we insisted on it and then fully explained the bad situation in the occupied territories. We also raised the issues of settlements, Jerusalem, refugees, dealing with the Palestinians, elections, and redeployment. International newspapers referred to the pressure Egypt exercised on Israel in the presence of the Americans.

[Taqiy-al-Din] We know that you are trying to exercise pressure. But what is the result of that pressure?

[Musa] We are doing what we can, and reactions are something different. We are carrying out our national duty in a logical way. We are not moving the world, but clarifying matters.

[Taqiy-al-Din] Will the Syrian and Lebanese tracks be reactivated?

[Musa] Of course, we hope so. The U.S.-Syrian talks have not failed but the Israeli-Lebanese talks have not yet begun. The two tracks are linked. Israel's hesitation to meet its obligations prompts Syria to be cautious. By focusing on exaggerated domestic security issues and by trying to convince the world of them, Israel is addressing a negative message. Regarding Lebanon, we believe there is a positive point, namely, Israel's declaration, even by the previous Likud government, that Israel has no ambitions in Lebanese territories. But just talking while Lebanon is being threatened by Israel will further complicate the matters. Stalemate always leads to retreat rather than progress. Southern Lebanon needs security agreements.

[Taqiy-al-Din] Do you mean that such agreements may precede the Syrian-Israeli peace march?

[Musa] No. I cannot comment on this. The Israelis have such ideas. Activating the Lebanese track is necessary. We seize every opportunity, even our recent meeting in Washington, to raise the Lebanese track issue, which should not be ignored by any logic.

'Arafat, Delegation Arrive in Cairo

Mubarak, 'Arafat Hold Talks

NC2202085995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0840 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 22 Feb (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak received Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat at the Presidential Office this morning. The held a session of talks attended by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa.

The Palestinian president arrived in Cairo last night to chair the PLO Executive Committee meetings, which ended early this morning.

Executive Committee Members Join Talks

NC2202095295 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0912 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 22 Feb (MENA)—Members of the PLO Executive Committee joined the session of talks held today between President Husni Mubarak and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat.

The Executive Committee members who took part were Yasir 'Abd- Rabbuh, Jawid al-Ghusayn, Jamal al-Surani, Samir Ghawshah, Bishop Iliya Khuri, 'Ali Ishaq, Muhammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi, Zuhdi al- Qidrah, Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, and Nabil Sha'th.

Preparations Said Under Way for Summit With Syria

JN2102164495 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 19 Feb 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Muhammad 'Allam in Cairo]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Informed sources in Cairo yesterday said that intensive contacts are under way to hold a meeting in Damascus between Presidents Husni Mubarak and Hafiz al-Asad to end the coolness in bilateral relations, which grew after Cairo called for a four-way summit on 2 February (which grouped Mubarak, King Husayn, Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin), and following the criticism directed by the official Syrian media against the summit. The Syrian media said the Cairo summit constituted a retreat from the Alexandria summit and was aimed to pressure Syria. This was especially the case since the four parties and the United States met in two five-way meetings; one in Taba on the level of trade ministers to discuss regional economic cooperation, and the other in Washington on the level of the foreign ministers to discuss support to the peace process.

Egyptian diplomatic sources refused to link the expected resumption of Egyptian-Syrian coordination with the escalating official campaigns between Egypt and Israel. The sources said: Consultations between Cairo and Damascus are not influenced by any foreign factors and the convictions of the two parties remain unchanged. There are also differences between Egypt and Syria, but such differences are natural and will not obstruct the continuity of consultations and coordination. They sources stressed that the four-way summit did not aim to pressure Syria but to rescue the Palestinian-Israeli track of negotiations from a destructive crisis which it is facing.

The sources said that Egypt showed understanding of the Syrian reaction to the four-way summit. They said Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' met in Cairo after the summit to hold talks. Sources note that al-Shar's visit to Egypt after the summit confirms the existing convictions.

The same sources denied what has been reported on an indefinite postponement of the meetings of the higher joint committee co- chaired by the prime ministers of both countries. The committee was scheduled to meet in Cairo in the first week of March. The sources say that domestic and foreign engagements prompted the postponement of the meeting and that contacts are underway to set another appropriate date. [passage omitted]

Musa Accepts Invitation To Visit Sudan

NC2102171695 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1649 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Feb (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has received a message from newly appointed Sudanese Foreign Minister 'Uthman Muhammad Taha inviting him to visit Sudan.

After his meeting with Sudanese Ambassador al-Tayyib al- Kurdufani, who delivered the message, the foreign minister said that he accepted the invitation but the date will be set later.

He added that he sent a response to the Sudanese foreign minister's message, inviting him to visit Cairo. He added that he asked the ambassador to convey a special greeting to former Sudanese Foreign Minister Dr. Husayn Sulayman Abu-Salih.

Musa said that he will meet with the Sudanese foreign minister on the sidelines of the next Arab League Council meeting in Cairo on 22 March. That meeting will mark the Arab League's 50th anniversary.

Egyptian Forces Return From Somalia

NC1702142295 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1328 GMT 17 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 17 Feb (MENA)—The first groups of the Egyptian Armed Forces that participated in the UN peacekeeping mission in Somalia returned to Egypt today in implementation of the UN Security Council resolution providing for the phased withdrawal of the 15,000-strong force, which will be completed by the end of March. [passage omitted]

The last group of Egyptian forces is scheduled to return home from Somalia by the end of February. The Egyptian forces participated in the UN peacekeeping mission in Somalia in response to the UN call to maintain security and stability there. They were also motivated by pan-Arab feelings to heal the rift and end the conflict among the rival Somali factions, which killed and dispersed tens of thousands of Somalis.

Columnist Views NATO's Call To Confront Fundamentalism

NC1702181395 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 13 Feb 95 p 8

["Closeup" column by Salamah Ahmad Salamah: "Shall We Join NATO?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] NATO has failed over the past three years to find a settlement to the ongoing conflict in Bosnia. It also failed to confront the security challenges threatening stability in Europe resulting from the turmoil in the Balkan region. Despite its power and military might, NATO has failed to pressure Russia to pursue an even-handed policy toward Chechnya. NATO's new secretary general did not see in all these dangers any threats to Europe's security and stability. In his view, the new imminent danger is "Islamic fundamentalism" originating in the Arab world and the Middle East. He alleges that this danger is one of the most serious challenges—which must not be underestimated—to face the West after communism and since the end of the Cold War. He said that NATO must hold a dialogue with a number of Middle Eastern countries and North Africa on the security issues resulting from this new danger.

The countries that NATO Secretary Willy Claes proposes to hold a dialogue with are Egypt, Israel, Tunisia, Morocco, and Mauritania and to establish cooperative relations with them to confront the dangers of fundamentalist extremism so as to enable NATO to interfere militarily if necessary. Because in Claes' view, the danger of Islamic fundamentalism is more serious than communism and the Warsaw Pact, he—who is looking for a job, goal, or rather, an enemy—proposes to establish a defense system incorporating ballistic missiles to resist any attack or threats of attacks from the Middle Eastern countries. He based his argument on false claims circulated by Israel, claims that certain Middle Eastern countries are about to possess nuclear weapons.

Claes had held the post of Belgian foreign minister before he was chosen as NATO secretary general. He is not the first Western thinker to view the Islamic world as a danger similar to communism and one that replaces it. Those who want to preserve the West's cohesion are looking for a new enemy after communism's demise. Thus, the Mediterranean has become the new Berlin Wall which used to divide the two camps and the motto now is the green danger instead of the Red danger.

Certainly the new NATO secretary general, who is looking for a new role, does not understand the implications of the call to this new strategy. This strategy will not make it easy to differentiate between the Islamic world and Islamic fundamentalism. This would be the first time that NATO would interfere in our domestic affairs by establishing a missile defense system against the Middle Eastern countries. Has NATO contacted Egypt or shall we find ourselves under its umbrella unawares?

Arab-NATO Cooperation Viewed

NC1702215395 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 14 Feb 95 pp 16

[Report by 'Abd-al-Sattar Abu-Husayn]

[FBIS Translated Text] After the government shocked the public by hosting Zionist enemy Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin in his participating in the first quadripartite summit, which is to pave the way for establishing the Middle Eastern order, the Egyptian Government took another step threatening Egypt's independence and affiliation by joining an alliance that includes Israel, the Arab Maghreb Union, and the NATO countries to combat the Islamic movements under the title of "combating the Islamic fundamentalist extremism."

Last Sunday [12 February], NATO officially declared the beginning of a security dialogue with Egypt, Israel, Tunisia, Morocco, and Mauritania to discuss what they called Islamic extremism. NATO officials were cited as saying that it is possible to offer military aid to these countries to confront Islamic fundamentalism on much the same lines as the aid that the Eastern European countries—former Warsaw Pact members—receive, on the basis of their taking part in the "Participation for Peace" program. The Eastern European countries joined NATO according to this formula.

NATO's overture in taking the first steps to build a European- U.S.-Middle Eastern alliance to combat the Islamic movements followed contacts that have lasted for more than two years. During this period, the Egyptian, Israeli, and Tunisian Governments became enthusiastic about forming a joint mechanism to combat extremism in the Middle East. The government entrusted the Egyptian embassies in Brussels, Bonn, London, and Paris with following NATO's interest in the issue of "Islamic extremism in Egypt," as an extension of its interest in the overall phenomenon in North Africa and the Mediterranean. The government asked these embassies to try to benefit from this interest in obtaining specific aid that NATO may offer to Egypt to support it in confronting "extremism."

The reply from the Egyptian Embassy in Bonn affirmed that the NATO committee called "the committee charged with studying the situation in the Mediterranean" held two meetings in October 1992 and June 1993 to discuss the Islamic phenomenon. However, the reply ruled out the possibility of NATO offering aid to Egypt to confront extremism in view of NATO's system of work. The reply said that it is not customary for NATO to offer aid to assist a state that is not a member to confront a domestic situation." Official Egyptian circles considered the Bonn embassy reply on the possibility of NATO offering aid to Egypt to confront extremism the view of the diplomats in the embassy and not a rejection by NATO itself. These circles began contacts with Britain, France, and Germany—countries witnessing noticeable activity by Islamic fundamentalists. They also made contacts with Italy and Spain. The government claimed that it fully adheres to the law and human rights in its measures to combat terrorism and extremism. It stressed that it is in control of the situation in Egypt. It requested information from the European countries on Islamic activists in Europe, claiming that they represent an organic extension of the extremist organizations in Egypt and the North African countries. Europe's growing fears that the military junta government in Algeria may fall and the fundamentalists may take power there helped the Egyptian efforts to elicit NATO assistance. France and Germany consider that the fall of the military government in Algeria would be the beginning of the fall of the rest of the countries in North Africa into the hands of Islamists and would thereby threaten NATO's western flank.

On instructions from the United States, Germany led the call for changing NATO's military strategy to confront the Islamic danger in North Africa. German Chancellor Helmut Kohl warned the German military strategy planners of the Islamic movements in North Africa and urged them to chart the necessary plans to confront them. He said: The Islamic fundamentalist movements in North Africa are causing growing concern in Bonn and Paris and they are being monitored and studied carefully. He called for reconsidering the security plans for Europe and the Mediterranean basin in light of the ongoing incidents in Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco, which dictate that the German strategists study the possibility of the Islamic fundamentalists in the Mediterranean region obtaining medium-range missiles that can strike targets at a distance of 1,000 km. European security would face an extremely serious danger. Kohl requested that strategic experts "prepare the German Army for confronting extremist Muslims in the Mediterranean region and train them psychologically and morally for such a confrontation." Last month Germany indeed participated in military maneuvers with France, Spain, Italy, and Belgium for training in intervention in a country in North Africa where the Islamists have taken power. The maneuver scenario provided for evacuation of European nationals from this country. This assumption avoids outright mention of overthrowing Islamic rule. The maneuvers were followed by a meeting of the interior ministers of France, Spain, and Italy with their Algerian, Tunisian, and Moroccan counterparts to discuss security cooperation in combating the Islamic movements. Cairo received the details of the meeting after joining the Arab Maghreb Union as an observer.

AL-SHA'B has learned that NATO's cooperation with the aforementioned five countries in combating the Islamic movements will involve transferring NATO's maneuvers training in combating what they call extremism from Europe to the Middle East. The region will witness the first such military maneuver for this purpose in 1995 and two of these five countries are scheduled to host them.

Paper Urges U.S. To Adopt Credible Stance

NC1802112395 Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic
14 Feb 95 p 1

[Article by Jalal Duwaydar: "The Effectiveness of the U.S. Stance"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arab peoples are waiting to be convinced that the United States is a real and effective partner in the peace process and not an auxiliary factor supporting the Israeli stance.

The Arab world has become exasperated with the acts of pampering Israel, which is rejecting all the international legitimacy resolutions of the United Nations and the Security Council.

The excuses for double dealings in treating aggression against the rights of peoples and nations are not acceptable anymore. This phenomenon is exemplified by the distinction between Israel's crimes and the actions of any other country against peace, stability, and human rights.

There is nothing odd in seeing Washington exert pressure on countries to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, but changing its tone toward Israel to one of desire and hope to the extent of asking it to give a promise of signing when God wills it?.

We greatly hope that the United States will opt for credibility in its dealing with the Middle East peace to reach a radical, comprehensive, and just solution that restores stability and security so that efforts can be fully devoted to the comprehensive peace to raise the standards of living of the region's peoples.

Washington must back firmly and decisively the principle of land in return for peace and must be convinced and convince Israel that there can be no real peace in the region without the participation of all parties, I mean Syria and Lebanon, as President Clinton noted.

Of course, it is nice to see U.S. President Clinton chairing the meeting of the four foreign ministers of the countries that attended the Cairo summit. But to ensure the effectiveness of this chairmanship by acting quickly to reach the comprehensive and just settlement is more important.

It is necessary to say here that there will be no peace without a fair solution to the Palestinian issue based on the Palestinians' retrieval of their legitimate rights.

Practicing the policy of starving the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank is a futile one because it will not solve the problem of Israel's security and will not stop the suicidal operations. Let it be clear that political and economic stances and this security, which Israel is exploiting to justify the obstacles it is placing on the peace course, cannot be separated.

The United States is only asked to be serious in dealing with the problems of peace and to try to abandon as much as possible the principle of double standards when dealing with the countries of the region. A clarity of stances and views also fall within the framework of these demands.

As the Washington meeting demanded that terrorism be fought, we are eager to say that Washington will never reap any gains from resorting to the convoluted policy of secretly contacting some symbols of the terrorist groups and simultaneously announcing measures to combat terrorism.

We wholeheartedly hope that the new U.S. action is the start of a stage where stances are characterized by credibility and a real desire to establish full and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Israel's Leaders Accused of Looking for Crisis

NC1802161995 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 18 Feb 95

[Commentary by Ahmad al-Qasir: "The Challenge of Peace Will Ultimately Impose Itself on Israel's Leaders"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Whoever has followed the Israeli leaders' remarks in the past few months must have noticed an unescapable fact; namely, that there is a carefully planned scheme, under which roles are parceled out to start a crisis with Egypt under any pretense. The purpose of this is to keep Egypt away from the peace process, scare the Arab parties, and deal with each of them separately, thus imposing on the Arabs the peace that Israel wants.

In the uproar of implementing these schemes and amid preparations for the coming elections, Israel's rulers have chosen to forget that Egypt is the key to peace and war in the Middle East and that it was the first Arab state to establish peace with Israel as a first step toward attaining a just and comprehensive peace in the Arab region, a peace that can guarantee the legitimate rights of all peoples in the region. Were it not for this daring step by Egypt, with its full political and cultural clout, we would not have had what we have today, as far as progress toward peace goes, despite all the obstacles and thorns Israel has placed before the Arab-Israeli negotiating process. [passage omitted]

Proof that what we are saying is true could be seen in the media campaigns and false accusations that Israel's rulers come out with daily against Egypt, first in the name of normalization between the Arabs and Israel, then of supposedly inciting the African states against Israel, and finally accusations of establishing new Arab axes. The worst example was Israel's agitation over Egypt's refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] unless Israel signs it too, which is something that concerns Egypt alone as a matter of national security. Things even went beyond that, to the point of making threats and hints about starting a new war.

To our minds, this Israeli scheme aims primarily at obstructing the peace process and even destroying up altogether, now that the challenge of peace has closed in on Israel from every direction. As a result and in the name of maintaining its security, Israel went about fabricating one reason after another to drag its feet in implementing the Palestinian-Israeli agreement, which is the cornerstone of the Middle East peace process. [passage omitted]

Despite all this, Egypt, through the efforts of President Husni Mubarak, has eagerly protected and saved the peace process from collapse more than once, due to its pan-Arab responsibility and absolute faith that a just peace is the only way to provide security and stability to the region's peoples, so that they can devote their energy to reconstruction and development. Now Mubarak is once again cautioning Israel's leaders about the danger of continuing to make random and false accusations against Egypt and creating a crisis in their bilateral relations. For, this will neither scare Egypt nor force it to back away from its position regarding the question of nuclear armament.

Lastly I must tell all who try to insult Egypt and its people that there is no use in doing so, for the challenge of peace must ultimately be met by everybody; consequently, there is no point in making problems and creating crises or marginal battles, which will not serve the interests of all the peoples of the region, who have been exhausted by wars, acts of violence, and counterviolence for many years.

Policeman Shot Dead in al-Minya

NC2102142995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1356 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Feb (MENA)—Policeman Suwaysi 'Abd-al-Hamid 'Irfan from al-Minya Governorate's Abu-Qurqas Police Force was martyred today. He was shot by unknown gunmen on his way to a field he owns in the Safay area.

An Interior Ministry security source reported that al-Minya's senior security officials, detectives from other agencies, and forensic experts left for the scene of the attack.

The Prosecutor's Office has been notified.

Nature of Muslim Brotherhood Leader Analyzed

NC1702130795 Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic 10 Feb 95 pp 18-20

[Report by Hamdi Rizq: "The Secret History of Mustafa Mashhur, Nominated To Be the Brotherhood's Guide"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Interesting revelations resulted from the investigations conducted last week by the Higher State Security Prosecution with 28 members of the organization known as the Dr. al- 'Iryah Organization. They confirmed, through videotapes, the Guidance Bureau's readiness to nominate Mustafa Mashhur, 73, to succeed General Guide Hamid Abu-al-Nasr, whose health has greatly deteriorated and who is retiring to Manfalut, his hometown in Asyut. Abu-al-Nasr has left the group's affairs and plans in the hands of his deputy and right-hand man Mustafa Mashhur, who it seems is certain to get the guide's job, with help from Abu-al-Nasr's second deputy, Dr. Ahmad al-Malat, who is too sick to get the job himself. The job would be another one to be added to Mashhur's overwhelming list of secret positions, most importantly, his leadership of what is known as the International Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood.

We say that the nomination of this violent man, the leader of the hardliners in the group, the so-called disciples of al-Sindi, named after the leader of the Special Order (military wing] 'Abd-al- Rahman al-Sindi, indicates in our view that the group is geared toward an era of violent action, the kind of action that Mashhur has known since he was young, when he joined the Special Order in 1940. In eight years, Mashhur quickly climbed the ladder to turn from a meteorologist into one of the most dangerous elements in a team directly responsible for the assassinations that took place during the era of the monarchy, that was behind the al-Manshiyah incident [attempt to assassinate late President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir while delivering a speech in Alexandria in October 1954], and that was behind organizations established both inside and outside prison. He had a finger in the pie of every incident, be it by way of planning or execution, especially as he was one of the main pillars of the 12-member Constituent Council of the Special Order. Mashhur has always been the most prominent member of this council and the one who has been shown care by General Guide Hasan al-Banna, who personally supervised the order and picked up its members.

According to the scanty information available on Mashhur, who was born in Minya al-Qamh, al-Sharqiyah on 15 September 1921, he leads the hardline current within the group: the Guidance Bureau. As well as him, this current includes Dr. Ahmad Muhammad al-Malat, a physician, and Ahmad Muhammad Hasanayn. Hasanayn is a trader from Qalyub and is now in charge of the Brotherhood's publishing house in al-Sayyidah Zaynab [a Cairo district]. Together with al-Malat and Mashhur, Hasanayn constitutes the apex of the triangle known within the group as the "Hawks Wing." [passage omitted]

Any follower of the Brotherhood's activity would not miss the role of Mashhur. According to the former chief of State Security Intelligence, Major General Fu'ad 'Allam, the sly, violent Mashhur, who hates middle-of-the-road solutions, chose the current guide, Abu-al-Nasr, over all the others from the group's old guard who deserved to get the job, because Abu-al-Nasr is weak and easily led. He set out to promote him as a moderate facade for the group before the authority, knowing that he, Mashhur, and his hardliners would be left to run the movement. According to Maj. Gen. 'Allam, Mashhur likes to refer to himself as being capable of changing his political colors. His experience as a meteorologist made him aware of what goes on in politics, which are exactly like the weather.

The most serious security reports available on the man—and they are rare considering that he is well-versed in secret organizations and only operates underground—reveal that he has strong links with both Sudan and Iran, which he has visited. His last suspicious trip to Sudan was last year, when he met Dr. Hasan al-Turabi, the Brotherhood's official in Sudan, and representatives of the world's violent movements and organizations. It was the conference al- Turabi called for as part of what is known as the "Arab Islamic Popular Conference," which was also attended on behalf of the amirs of violence by Ayman al-Zawahiri, the fugitive official in charge of the al-Jihad Organization; Usamah Bin-Ladin, a Saudi national who is the main financier of terrorist organizations in Egypt; and members of the Palestinian Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], the Algerian National Salvation Front, and the Ennahda movement. Ennahda, which operates in Tunis, was represented at the meeting by Dr. Rached Ghannouchi, who now lives in exile in Paris.

Nothing shows his danger and external influence more than Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's seeking a meeting with him along with other Brotherhood leaders two months ago at the AL-DA'WAH magazine's office in al-Tawfiqiyah [downtown Cairo] to urge these leaders to put pressure on Hamas to end its aggressive operations in the occupied territories and establish cooperation between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority, especially as the "al-Tawfiqiyah Brothers" consider Hamas their declared external military wing in Palestine.

Information on this man, who has taken command of the intelligence apparatus of the secret organization throughout its history and is described by people close to him as an extremely secretive and bold man who does not hesitate to use violence, is that he spent five years in the United States when he escaped the September 1981 detention measures [ordered by late President Anwar al-Sadat]. In that time he set up and nurtured a strong Brotherhood entity in the United States, as represented by some cultural and scientific institutions and organizations as well as some investment enterprises, such as the International Institute for Islamic Thinking in Washington and the "Akbar" Institution, which has extensive ties to the Iranian regime. [passage omitted]

Mashhur, who is clearly nervous nowadays and declines any press interviews, gave one of his most important interviews to the Kuwaiti newspaper AL-QABAS published in 1990. In it he defined his position toward the Islamic groups of various inclinations as one of love, fraternity, cooperation, and loyalty. He added: We love them, cooperate with them, try to bring views closer, and reconcile the various ideologies in a way that justice could triumph through cooperation and love. No dispute about jurisprudence or sectarian differences can keep us apart. We believe the day will come when every name, title, superficial distinction, and theoretical barrier will collapse and be replaced by a practical unity grouping the ranks of the Muhammadan battalion together. Then there will be only Muslim brothers.

The man does not hide the Brotherhood's real position regarding these terrorists. He says: "I basically believe that the leaders of these groups should live according to the nature of the stage we are passing through, which requires action to achieve the overall goal, namely, an Islamic state and the need to gear every effort toward serving this goal."

Mashhur demands the amirs of violence "stop any attitude that involves attack on other groups." Other

Muslims mean nothing to him. He adds: "There must be solidarity and constructive criticism through the natural channels, not through slander or defamation. Let our slogan be: Let us cooperate among ourselves in what we agree on and let each one of us excuse the other over what we disagree on."

These are the words of the Brotherhood's coming guide. He opens his arms to every organization, because they all belong to him and he to them. He counsels them and offers them unity in their goals. As for the killing and the shedding of blood at the hands of these groups, it is all in the nature of the stage, in his opinion, which requires action to achieve the overall goal, when there will be only Muslim brothers. As for the others, these groups can take care of them.

Libya

Al-Qadhdhafi on Islamists, Lockerbie, Israel

LD2202105795 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2033 GMT 21 Feb 95

[Speech by Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi at religious festival in Tajura' on 20 February—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] On this blessed night, and this truly historic anniversary of the conquest of Mecca, we are celebrating today in the Abi Rawi religious center in Tajura'. This is one of the historic centers of learning in our country, which with the others in Misratah, Zlitan M'Silatah, Tripoli, al-Zawiyah, and [word indistinct] have the distinction of preparing a generation of jurisprudents, religious scholars, mujahidin, teachers, and men of good works who spread goodness and piety throughout this country. Until now this remains one of these historical centers. [passage omitted]

When they colonized Palestine we paid the price, so that until now we have to live in the shadow of terror of Israel. They say that Israel has [words indistinct] 200 nuclear bombs [words indistinct]. Two hundred nuclear bombs. The whole world got obsessed with our factory in al-Rabitah; until now the whole world is obsessed with the al-Rabitah factory. The Israelis have a few nuclear bombs, about 200 hundred bombs. Why are you Arabs worried? Why is Egypt screaming? You did not even sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty? They [Egypt] support peace. They are right. We in Libya have our right. Our waters in the Gulf of Sidra are threatened, and our regional waters are threatened. We are threatened from the north and the south by imperialist ambitions. So we have the right, like the Israelis, to have nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons if we can find a way to get them.

We base ourselves on this logic, on our own logic, and not the logic of the Americans, or the French, or the Germans, or the Italians, or the English. They said the Israelis are in danger as long as there are states which are hostile to them; they have the right to produce atomic bombs. Yet the Libyan man is in danger because we have states which are hostile to us—major powers. Today they imposed sanctions and [word indistinct] on us [words indistinct]. Like the Israelis we are threatened and it is our right to own weapons of mass destruction. They can never challenge us. They can never confront us.

After this, they tear up the Arab homeland, coolly and slowly. Yesterday, they announced an economic bloc in the heart of the Arab homeland headed by what is called Israel, in Taba. Can you believe it? They linked the Arab Maghreb with western European security.

The fundamentalist movements are not terrorist movements. I know Abassi [Madani], [Rached] Ghannouchi, [Hasan] al-Turabi, [Fathi] al-Shaqaqi, and I know Yasin. All these are not terrorists. They are fundamentalists and they have nothing to do with terrorism. We are against terrorism in Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, and elsewhere. And in all cases terrorism concerns us. It does not concern America or France. The fundamentalists movements are movements which take part in elections. They are peaceful movements, fundamentalist movements are in the long run, they are political parties.

We are not against them. We are responsible for them. We—the revolutionaries are responsible for them. But those who commit assassinations and kill in the dark and let off bombs and kill children in the streets and kill innocent people and blow up bridges and roads like what is happening these days in Algeria and which nearly happened in Tunisia—let us hope it will not happen in the future in Tunisia—and it is happening now in Egypt and it did happen in Syria; that was terrorism and never was the work of the fundamentalist Islamist movements for which we are responsible. [passage omitted]

Yesterday, the Israeli radio said that next month there will be military exercises off the Tunisian coast in which Zionism, and the Israelis will take part as well as Kuwait, Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco. Today Kuwait announced saying: We can never take part in maneuvers of this kind and all this talk has no basis of truth. Kuwait had no knowledge of this maneuver and it cannot take part in it.

I believe that the other Arab countries must set out their position. Tunisia does not have any coasts [as heard]; this means the coasts of Libya. What does it mean—the Israelis holding exercises off Arab coasts? See how it [Israel] is gradually going past the red lines, so that Zionism and America can enter.

NATO is discussing Islam in North Africa. And I think that Egypt announced yesterday that the NATO secretary general had nothing to do with Islam in North Africa, that the Egyptian ambassador could not meet him next Friday and that they rejected such things. They are rejecting orders, orders from America. Orders from America are issued to NATO and Europe and they are carried out at the expense of the Arab nation.

They are orders; and Egypt is rejecting these orders. I think that Egypt has now discovered the game and realized the truth of the Hebrew state which has raped Palestine, that there cannot be peace with it, and that the Israelis will keep nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons forever until the Arab nation is extinct. Egypt has realized that the so-called Israel is a real danger to Egypt above all. Egypt is goal number one for Zionism. [passage omitted]

We challenge America to make Israel implement the Security Council resolutions, then Libya will implement the Security Council resolutions. The Security Council issued Resolution 425 which said that the Israelis must withdraw from southern Lebanon within 24 hours. Seventeen years have passed since this resolution asking them to withdraw within 24 hours. Why did America not ask the Israelis to implement this resolution within 24 hours or ask for an embargo and sanctions against them and force them to ...[pauses]...why is this resolution not put under the seventh article of the UN Charter?

The Lockerbie issue has been listed under Chapter Seven. This is unjust and false. Its place is not even Chapter Six; it is outside the jurisdiction of the Security Council, because it is a civil judicial case. It is a legal case that has absolutely nothing to do with politics. Someone, hitherto unknown, has blown up a plane, and Libya has to pay the price for the blowing up of a plane by an unknown person under Chapter Seven.

We cannot recognize the Security Council until all the [member] states are equal and all its resolutions are respected by all the states. We do not recognize the implementation of any resolution until the Israelis implement all the resolutions passed against them by the so-called Security Council. We will implement Security Council resolutions after the Israelis have implemented all the Security Council resolutions.

We will wait until all the resolutions passed before [the resolutions concerning] Libya are implemented. Our place is in the resolutions that come after 700. The Security Council had passed 700 resolutions [before the one on Lockerbie], and we will assess every resolution to see whether it has been implemented. We will be prepared to implement [the resolution concerning Libya] if they have all been implemented. We will implement the resolution as dictated. [passage omitted]

Jews, whoever they may be, have no right to make Jerusalem the political capital of a state. Jerusalem is a religious city; it is for all religions. It is a temple to be visited by everyone, and it is situated in the Arab homeland and should be primarily under Arab and Muslim dominion. [passage omitted]

Whatever we said is all true. Whatever we said about Gaza, Jericho, and the secret talks of the gangsters in Norway or Oslo turned out to be true. It was disgraceful to discuss and decide their fate and that of Jerusalem, Palestine, and Acre in the North Pole. Their fate will be decided on the street by the fedayeen. [passage omitted]

Brothers; Arabs like Jordan, Oman, the Gulf, the Arab Maghreb, have recognized the state of Israel. All the Maghreban states have recognized it [as heard]. They have clearly opened embassies [in Israel]. There is an Israeli ambassador, and there is an Arab ambassador in Tel Aviv. Has the so-called Israel recognized a Palestinian state? Has a Palestinian state been set up, so that this Jewish state may be recognized? Never. Well then, why should you Arabs recognize Israel?. Israel is now saying that it cannot recognize a Palestinian state, and you Arabs, why should you recognize a Jewish state, so long as the Jewish state refuses to recognize a Palestinian state? Has America recognized a Palestinian state? America refuses until doomsday to recognize a Palestinian state. Why then should you Arabs recognize the Hebrew state? [passage omitted]

We have touched on this subject because we are commemorating the anniversary of the [Prophet's] conquest of Mecca and inaugurating a center of knowledge and civilization, the Abu Rawi center in Tajura', this historic place. Our weapons are our religion, history, nationhood, language, our land on which we stand. We are stressing this at this center, on the occasion of the anniversary of the conquest of Mecca. We show that history repeats itself. We need a new conquest. [crowd chants: "Go ahead O leader, we are with you; our principle is yours"]

We have worked so that our brothers in Saudi Arabia do not lose face, so they resolve their problems, and do not place themselves in the dock in an embarassing situation in front of the Islamic nation. But, if they persist in preventing the Libyan pilgrims from flying in airplanes from Libya to Mecca then they will find themselves in a very bad situation, and we will not be able to remain silent about it. [passage omitted]

We have this Sahara, this sea, this oil, sun, and for our right, for the sake of right we are prepared to destroy everything—and this is the correct attitude—rather than recognize Israel. This is at a time when NATO is arriving in North Africa [reference to NATO's proposals for talks with Mediterranean countries on fighting fundamentalism], and Israeli maneuvers are to take place in Tunisian and Libyan waters, and when the Security Council resolutions are supposed to apply only to Libya, Iraq, and the Arabs, while Israel is exempted from Article Seven [of the UN charter], and from the ban on weapons of mass destruction which it may possess at will, whereas we are banned from even setting up a medicine plant.

No, this is unjustice and encroachment. We do want to live in such a shabby situation. We are ready for martyrdom, we are ready to open up the borders and the [arms] depots and start a war in which North Africa will be ablaze for decades. If one is warned then one only has oneself to blame. [Crowd chants slogans: "Jihad, Jihad"].

Official Views 'Dangers' of NATO Statements

LD1902165795 Tripoli Great Jamahiriyah Radio Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 19 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The brother secretary of the General People's Committee of Unity received today ambassadors from Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Mauritania in the

Great Jamahiriyah, and reviewed with them the dangers of the call by NATO Secretary General Willy Claes to initiate a dialogue with some Arab countries, a dialogue with the participation of the Israeli enemy on internal issues concerning those Arab countries. They reviewed the dangerous implications of this invitation: one, the increased intervention in the Arab nation's internal affairs, and two, the consideration of the Israeli enemy as a principal element in the Arab region to be invited to participate in international meetings that concern this region.

We ask here: What relation does an alliance of a military nature have with the discussion of political issues, and what are the implications of that by according the NATO umbrella with the protection of the Israeli enemy?

Mauritania

Government Announces Cabinet Reshuffle

AB2102190695 Paris AFP in French 1645 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Nouakchott, 21 Feb (AFP)—Mauritanian Prime Minister Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubaker today reshuffled his cabinet, one month after the violent street demonstrations by youths protesting a 25 percent increase in bread prices. The cabinet reshuffle was marked by the entry of five new ministers.

Among the new ministers are Sidi Mohamed Ould Biya, who occupies the finance portfolio, and Loulei Ould Weddad, the minister of education. Mr. Weddad has since 1984 been serving as the permanent undersecretary to President of the Republic, Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya.

The three other ministers are Alavia Ould Mohamed Khouna of the Fisheries and Maritime Economy Ministry, N'gaedi Lamine of the Ministry of Mines and Industry, and Sow Mohamed Deina of Transport and Equipment.

On 21 and 22 January, hundreds of youth from the residential districts of the Mauritanian capital had demonstrated against the increase in bread price, ransacking shops and damaging vehicles with stones and clubs.

The following day [23 January] two opposition leaders, Hamdi Ould Mouknass, leader of the Union for Democracy and Progress and Ahmed Ould Daddah, secretary general of the Union of Democratic Forces were placed under house arrest, prior to their release on 3 February.

The 25 percent hike in bread prices came after the introduction of two new taxes on foods and industrial products. According to the government, traders should not have passed on the two taxes to reflect the prices of essential commodities, because they were replacements for two other levies.

Today's cabinet reshuffle was also marked by four changes in portfolios. Abdallahi Ould Abdi, former minister of civil service, becomes the new minister of defense; Melainine Ch'bih Ould Cheikh [name as received] leaves the Commerce Ministry for the Ministry of Planning; Diagana Moussa, former minister of equipment, now becomes the minister of Commerce, Handicrafts & Tourism. Finally, Sidi Mohamed Ould Mohamed Fall, who occupied the portfolio of industry, becomes the new minister of civil service.

Government Adopts Measures To Defuse Social Tension

AB2002105095 Libreville Africa No. 1 in French 0700 GMT 20 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The social tension resulting from the hike in essential consumer goods prices is persisting. In the face of this situation, the Mauritanian Government, through its prime minister, has announced a package of measures to defuse the tension. These measures include the introduction of controls to check monopoly and speculation and the expansion of the area of operation of the state's essential goods distribution company. Salem Meshbour Salem reports from Nouakchott:

[Begin Salem recording] The Mauritanian head of government explained that the area of operation of the National Import and Export Company [SONIMEX] will now cover all essential consumer goods including rice, sugar, milk, tea, vegetable cooking oil, and, especially, bread. It will be recalled that the 25-percent increase in the price of this staple food resulted in the 21 and 22 January riots. The prime minister tried to reassure consumers and stated that the government has decided to generalize and increase SONIMEX selling points in all districts. According to the prime minister, the government will set up new market control and monitoring mechanisms for curbing hikes in essential goods prices.

The head of government also disclosed that firm measures have been taken to punish traders who have taken advantage of the introduction of the VAT in Mauritania to increase prices and, therefore, penalize consumers. He explained that the VAT was designed and implemented in such way that it would not significantly affect prices since the VAT only replaced other taxes—the turnover and service taxes—which have been canceled. The prime minister said that those who have benefited from the VAT and continue to increase prices must be found out and punished. [end recording]

Sudan

President Establishes New Governorate

EA2002191895 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 20 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, the president of the Republic, has issued an order to establish the Baw Governorate, with its capital at Baw in the Blue Nile State. This is in accordance with Article 223 of the Division of Governorates Act of 1991.

Al-Turabi on Ties With Egypt, Violence, Human Rights

NC1802111095 Cairo AL-'ARABI in Arabic 13 Feb 95 p 9

[Interview with Hasan al-Turabi, leader of the National Islamic Front, by 'Imad-al-Din Husayn in Khartoum; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Husayn] Dr. Hasan al-Turabi, from what I saw in Khartoum I am almost shocked at this deterioration in Egyptian-Sudanese relations at the official and popular levels.

[Al-Turabi] You should not leave Sudan with such a shock. Relations between the two peoples are based on a common historic heritage and cultural unity, and good mutual sentiments still exist. Crises are only accidental developments; they get severe at times and die down at others.

[Husayn] Egypt is explicitly accusing Sudan of supporting terrorism and helping in the training of extremists.

[Al-Turabi] This is not true. We offered to let the Egyptian or any other side come to search for the alleged training camps in Sudan. Recently, the majority of the European countries and the United States have not been much convinced that we really support terrorism; there is no single piece of evidence to prove it.

[Husayn] But the issue is not a training camp with an identification banner. It is enough to offer the extremists residence permits, passports, and contact facilities.

[Al-Turabi] All this is not true, and Sudan is open to whoever wishes to come to check the truth.

[Husayn] So, what is the essence of the differences between Egypt and Sudan? Is it only over the region of Hala'ib?

[Al-Turabi] Hala'ib is only a symptom. The border between the two countries was not determined by them, it was drawn during colonialism. But it seems to me that the differences between the two countries essentially revolve around Sudan's official and popular orientation, which is leading the country toward Islam as a comprehensive way of life. Perhaps there is in Egypt a different trend in religion as an ideology and a way of life.

[Husayn] How do you think the problem between the two countries can be solved?

[Al-Turabi] Differences in public life come and go. But if they last for eras, they become cultural differences leaving their impact in people's hearts. Media and public opinion in the two counties, therefore, should maintain the confidence between the two peoples to serve as a reserve asset. Let us have patience. Perhaps things will change and the situation will go back to normal.

[Husayn] How do you view the acts of violence in Egypt? Is the killing of innocent policemen by extremists encouraged by Islam?

[Al-Turabi] What is taking place in Egypt is not violence started by the good-natured Egyptian people. We should ask: Who started the use of force? I believe that the government started violence and restricted people's freedoms!

[Husayn] But these groups practice violence as if it is an end in itself, which largely distorts the image of Islam in the world.

[Al-Turabi] As I said, it was the government that started violence. Had those groups obtained their freedom, violence would have stopped!

[Husayn] Do you think that these extremist groups can achieve power in Egypt?

[Al-Turabi] They may, and they may not!

[Husayn] Do you think the West and the United States are behind the deterioration in the relations between the two countries?

[Al-Turabi] Naturally, it is in the interest of the West that Egypt and Sudan not have normal relations and unified positions. The objective of the West is to fragment the two countries and pull them apart. Also, the current differences between Egypt and Sudan are a model of differences in the Arab arena. The West also realizes that the Islamic civilization is a great danger and, therefore, is trying to undermine and eradicate it and dissipate the capabilities of Arabs and Muslims; the way to do this is to create conflicts and problems between the Arab countries. We must not fall into this trap, and those who carry the strategic responsibility—Egypt and Sudan—should be aware of this plague.

[Husayn] Have mediation attempts between Egypt and Sudan completely stopped?

[Al-Turabi] I cannot be decisive, but an initiative from here or there may be made. At least the people in the two countries instinctively think of unity; these repeated popular attempts seem to be a method unfamiliar to and unwelcomed by the Arabs.

[Husayn] There is almost unanimity that the Sudanese Government is violating human rights and the rights of its opponents.

[Al-Turabi] What is published against us in the West only strengthens the Sudanese people's adherence to Islam. I asked many Europeans who visited me in my office and raised human rights issues. Why do you not discuss human rights in the countries around us? In Sudan, there is no political isolation; the majority of al-Ansar leaders announced allegiance to the president; the U.S. ambassador jogs in Khartoum streets without guards, and his wife said she felt safer here than in the United States. Moreover, do we have here in Sudan political assassinations? What is actually happening is attempts, in the name of human rights, to isolate Sudan politically and economically. The United States did all it could to achieve this, but some European countries, like France, confronted it.

Ambassador to Tehran Views Relations With Iran

LD2202091295 Tehran IRNA in English 0720 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, Feb. 22, IRNA—The Sudanese ambassador to Tehran, Qutbi al-Mahdi Tuesday [21 February] underlined the need to strengthen Tehran-Khartoum relations. In an interview with Sudanese Radio Omdurman, he expressed hope that more steps would be taken in future to promote bilateral cooperation. He added that the two countries joint cooperation committee will be formed in April with presence of deputy Iranian foreign minister in Sudan.

Referring to mutual economic ties, al-Mahdi expressed hope that after finishing the on-going projects by Iran's reconstruction jihad in his country, other development projects would begin by the ministry.

Expressing satisfaction over the trend of activities made by Iranian private sector in Sudan, the ambassador announced that a delegation from Sudan's Chamber of Commerce would be dispatched to the Islamic republic to discuss further cooperation between state and private sectors.

The construction jihad is active in four areas in Sudan including road building, agriculture, rendering health services, women's professional trainings.

Al-Ummah Says Split From NIF 'Irrevocable'

95AA0092A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 10 Feb 95 p 1

[Report by Uthman Mirghani]

[FBIS Translated Text] Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, former Sudanese prime minister and leader of the opposition al-Ummah Party, has affirmed that the divorce and split between his party and the National Islamic Front [NIF], led by Dr. Hasan al-Turabi, is irrevocable. He accused the NIF of seeking to impose a super-party system on the people of Sudan "after establishing a system that depends on the legitimacy of coercion and fait accomplis."

This was contained in a long article al-Sadiq al-Mahdi published in the AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, dealing with the history of the relations between the al-Ummah Party and the NIF.

Al-Mahdi's article, which strongly attacks the NIF and the present regime in Sudan, has apparently quashed speculation about reconciliation.

Khartoum announced the day before yesterday that al-Mahdi had met with Muhammad al-Amin Khalifah, chairman of the transitional National Assembly. The Sudanese News Agency said that Khalifah and al-Mahdi discussed the "national reconciliation efforts."

In his article, al-Mahdi accused the NIF of being fickle, Machiavellian, and opportunistic. He said the NIF does not believe in a specific basis for legitimacy. "It prefers to make a fatwa [Islamic ruling] on legitimacy according to circumstances." He said: "Islam has political duties. If a regime does not exercise these duties, it becomes a dictatorship."

Al-Mahdi said: "We have disagreed with the NIF leaders, and they have disagreed with the Islamic and national majority in Sudan. They—not Islam or the Sudanese national movement—should be held responsible for the great failure they achieved."

Tunisia

'Arafat Briefs Ben Ali on Israeli Peace Process

LD2102150295 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali met with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat today at Carthage Palace. President 'Arafat made a statement after the meeting in which he said that he was pleased to meet his excellency the president, especially in light of important and decisive circumstances through which the peace process with the Israelis is passing. He added: I also briefed his excellency the president in detail about the procrastinations and obstacles facing the peace process, the Israeli side's nonaccurate and nonfaithful implementation of what had been agreed, particularly in connection with the elections, which were supposed to have taken place last July, and the withdrawal of the Israeli Army from the rest of the West Bank, particularly from the populated areas.

President 'Arafat also said: I have listened carefully to the good, blessed, and important advice of his excellency the president, from which we can benefit in pursuing our difficult effort and our long road, and agreed that Tunisia will make international contacts in this respect, which we hope will have positive results on the entirety of the peace process. [passage omitted]

The meeting took place in the presence of Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahia, Faruq al-Qaddumi, head of the PLO's Political Department, and Hakam Bal'awi, member of Fatah's Central Committee and the PLO representative.

Notes Tunisia's Role

NC2102152895 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1507 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunis, 21 Feb (MENA)—Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat has announced that during a meeting he held with Tunisian President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali today, they agreed that Tunisia will conduct international contacts related to the Palestinian-Israeli peace process. 'Arafat voiced hope that the results of these contacts will be favorable for the entire peace operation.

In a statement after the meeting, 'Arafat said that he had briefed the Tunisian president in detail on all the procrastinations and obstacles that surround the peace process and Israel's failure to sincerely and precisely implement the agreements reached, particularly with regard to the Palestinian elections, which should have been held in July 1994, and the withdrawal of the Israeli Army from the rest of the West Bank towns, particularly the densely populated areas.

'Arafat said that the peace process is passing through an important and fateful stage as a result of the Israeli positions.

'Arafat's meeting with Ben Ali was attended by Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department; and Habib Ben Yahya, the Tunisian foreign minister.

Ben Ali Renews Commitment to Arab Maghreb Union

LD1802133295 Rabat MAP in English 1315 GMT 18 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat Feb. 18 (MAP)—President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia renewed his country's determination to effectively contribute to the construction of the Maghreb to meet Maghreban peoples' aspirations to build up their common future in brotherhood and solidarity and to foster well-being, prosperity, security and stability in the region.

In a message he sent to King Hassan II on the occasion of the 6th anniversary of the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) celebrated Friday [17 February], President Ben Ali also said that 6 years after its setting up, and thanks to a common political will, the Union achieved noteworthy results and set ambitious programs and projects in various realms. This was done in a rational and moderate way taking into account Maghreban national abilities and the changes sweeping over the world as well as some objective challenges thrown at the region, President Ben Ali said.

The message which voiced trust in the future stated further that the rich human resources and economic potentials harbored by Maghreban countries and their privileged geographic location will surely enable the union to occupy its due place on the international scene and to consolidate its relations with other regional groupings to set up in the Mediterranean region a pattern of partnership and cooperation.

The Moroccan media largely commented Friday on the celebration of this anniversary. Papers of all trends stressed the importance of the Union for the future of the region and surveyed the steps covered since the UMA setting up treaty was signed in Marrakesh on February 17, 1989.

The dailies conceded that some difficulties have actually crippled the Union's structures but, they said, these difficulties are conjunctural and cannot undermine the Union principle especially if there is a sincere Maghreban will to overcome the obstacles.

All the dailies agreed that Maghreban cooperation and complementarity is a key factor for the development of the region and for the prosperity of Maghreban peoples.

UMA gathers Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

Kuwait

Amir, Saudi King Discuss Gulf, Arab Issues

LD1902184995 Kuwait KSC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 19 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] We have just heard that his highness the Amir had a telephone conversation this evening with his brother, Saudi King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques. During the conversation, they discussed the latest developments in the Gulf and Arab arenas.

Amir Receives Message From Russia's Yeltsin

LD2102181695 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1700 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His highness the amir this afternoon received a message from Russia's President Boris Yeltsin. The message was delivered to Shaykh Nasir Muhammad al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the minister of amiri court affairs, by the Russian ambassador to Kuwait.

Paper Notes 'Dangerous Dimension' in Claes Statement

JN1702100695 Kuwait AL-WATAN in Arabic 12 Feb 95 p 32

["The Microscope Lens" column by Dr. 'Abdallah Fahd al-Nafisi]

[FBIS Translated Text] The statement which the NATO secretary general was keen to circulate to all news agencies—that NATO feels that "Islamic fundamentalism" is an imminent enemy which must be confronted through coordination with certain Middle Eastern states—can be viewed as a sign that the region is entering a new phase of expected confrontations which may, as is the case in Algeria, reach the point of civil war.

He who reads Shim'on Peres' recent book (The New Middle East, published by al-Ahliyah For Publishing and Distribution, Jordan) will note that throughout the pages of that book, Peres stresses that the "Islamic fundamentalism" can only be confronted with an "international coordination." It seems that the recent NATO sign came as a quick response to this call. The view of the West and the Zionists of what they call Islamic fundamentalism is very broad and loose. They see in any manifestation of adherence to Islam, even at the level of a veil worn by an Algerian schoolgirl in an elementary school in Lyon, a manifestation of fundamentalism which must be fought.

In his statement, NATO secretary general noted that he does not rule out the possibility of military, security, and political coordination with all the states that have an interest in confronting Islamic fundamentalism. This is a very dangerous dimension in the statement, which, if implemented, will drive the entire region into a state of long-term and violent internal polarization, especially if we take into consideration the fragility of the institutionalized structures in the region and the fact that several regimes in it lack any source of legitimacy.

It is important for the Arab and Islamic states, even those which, according to the NATO secretary general, have an interest in confronting Islamic fundamentalism, to think twice before they enter that endless dark tunnel. The core of the problem is not "the Islamic Movement," which is now undergoing a positive political internal development. But the problem is in political systems that still, despite the popular nature of the Islamic movement in Algeria for example, consider the movement without any legitimacy. The basic solution to this "problem" is to blend the Islamic Movement into the political process in the Arab and Islamic states. This is a measure, which the movement will welcome since that movement is considered to be without legitimacy. Anything else will only be a form of adventure.

Saudi Arabia

Pakistani Prime Minister Bhutto Arrives in Jeddah

LD1902194495 Riyadh SPA in English 1927 GMT 19 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jeddah, Feb 19, SPA—Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto arrived in Jeddah tonight from Madinah where she visited the blessed mosque of the prophet.

She was greeted at the King Abdulaziz International Airport by a representative of the royal protocol and many officials.

Paper Assails Israel Over NPT, 'Intransigence'

LD2202112095 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 0604 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 22 Feb (SPA)—The Saudi newspapers appeared this morning carrying the following main headlines. [passage omitted]

Concerning the Israeli intransigence toward the issue of possessing nuclear weapons, AL-MADINAH newspaper said that "Israel's determination to be the only winner in the Middle East, the only possessor of nuclear weapons, and its friends' support for this conception, cannot establish peace, but it will consecrate stronger reasons for a fiercer war. The Israelis are either ignorant of, or overlook what it will lead to."

The paper pointed out that the current nuclear crisis has clearly revealed to everyone the position of the peace mediators and their original stances toward the peoples and countries of the region, and toward the international values which they endeavor to lay down and promulgate.

The paper stressed that the ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] comes at the top of the priorities of U.S. foreign policy, but exercising any level of moral pressure on Israel to force it to sign has not yet become U.S. policy. The paper noticed that the obviously biased Western stance against the values of peace and justice, which the nuclear issue was an occasion to reveal, was there and dormant, and the results of which appeared without their mechanisms becoming apparent [as received]. "The Israeli intransigence in the peace process with the Palestinians is no more than another ugly face of the truth."

At the end of its article, the paper stressed that what is happening to the peace process in the Middle East is a flagrant example of what the arrogance of power can bring about, and what overlooking the facts of history can lead to.

Yemen

Salih Discusses Saudi, Iraqi Issues With U.S. Envoys

JN2102174995 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih today received David Welch, U.S. charge d'affaires in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed several issues of interest to relations between the two friendly countries and regional and international developments, particularly developments in the current negotiations between our country and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the Yemeni-Saudi borders, and the fraternal Iraqi people's suffering as a result of the continuation of the economic blockade on them.

The brother president expressed our country's concern about resolving the border problem with the brothers in Saudi Arabia through peaceful dialogue, mediation, arbitration, or by resorting to the International Court of Justice, in a manner to guarantee the two sides' legitimate rights and to reinforce security, stability, and peace in the region.

The brother president also stressed the importance of the humanitarian responsibility that should be assumed by the United States and the international community to alleviate the harsh suffering of the fraternal Iraqi people as a result of the continuing economic blockade on them.

Attending the meeting were Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, and David Newton, U.S. ambassador to our country.

Al-Iryani Confers With U.S. Envoys

JN2102175295 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, today received David Newton, ambassador of the United States to our country, and ambassador David Welch, deputy chief of mission at the U.S. embassy in Saudi Arabia.

During the meeting, he discussed with them relations between our country and the United States and the progress of the Yemeni-Saudi negotiations to reach a memorandum of understanding which sets a framework for border negotiations and normalization of relations between the two fraternal countries.

Coalition Parties Form 'Higher Command' To Harmonize Views

MM2102093595 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 17 Feb 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Faysal Makram: "Yemen: Higher Command To Bridge Views of Two Coalition Parties"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sanaa—The General People's Congress [GPC] and the Yemeni Reform Grouping [YRG], the two ruling coalition parties in Yemen, have agreed to form a higher command to act as the higher authority for the assessment of the government's performance and to bridge the political and organizational views of the two parties. It is headed by Prime Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al-Ghani and House of Representative Speaker Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Husayn al-Ahmar.

Enlarged meetings at the level of coordination committees began last week between the GPC and the YRG to consolidate relations betweend the two parties which form the bilateral government coalition.

Meanwhile, high-level consultations and dialogues are in progress between the leaderships of the GPC and the YRG to iron out the differences of opinion on the economic measures the government intends to introduce and implement in the coming few weeks.

According to leading members of the YRG's Higher Committee and the GPC's Permanent Committee, "dialogue is the only way to resolve any differences between the two coalition parties, be it at the governmental level or the party organizational and parliamentary levels, because dialogue is the choice of both parties for cementing the foundations of democracy in the country."

A number of YRG and GPC leaders have reaffirmed their commitment to the coalition document, which stipulates that dialogue is the only way to settle differences, bridge views, and overcome the varying positions on all issues linked to relations between the two parties and their ruling coalition on the basis of constitutional legitimacy and the country's political system of democracy and partisan pluralism.

AL-HAYAH has learned that the GPC and the YRG have formed a coalition higher command headed by 'Abd-al-Ghani and Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Ahmar to act as the higher authority in assessing the government's performance and in leading the alliance and coalition at various levels. It includes Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister, foreign minister, and member of the General Committee; 'Abd-al-Salam al-'Ansi, head of the General Department and member of the General Committee; 'Abd-al-Qadir Ba-Jammal, deputy prime minister, planning minister, and member of the General Committee; and Ahmad Musa'id Hasan, transport minister and member of the General Committee, for the GPC; and Shaykh Yasin 'Abd-al-'Aziz, deputy chairman of the Higher Committee; Shaykh 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Zindani, chairman of the Shura Council of the YRG; 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Anisi, deputy prime minister and assistant secretary general; and Muhammad Al-Baduni, the party's secretary general, for the YRG.

According to informed sources, bilateral committees from both parties have held extensive meetings in an attempt to find solutions that would unify the government decisions regarding measures necessary for tackling the economy and for financial administrative reforms.

The sources say that there have been differences of opinion between members of the government from both sides regarding economic reforms and ways of solving the peripheral problems obstructing implementation of decisions actually made by the government some days ago. An announcement of the decisions was postponed because of the emergence of some new views, especially from the reform ministry, which focused on the supply aspect for which the YRG is responsible through the supply and trade ministry. The differences are related to supply matters linked to the economic reform policy and the political line of the ruling coalition.

In conclusion, the sources said that implementation of the measures which the government has decided unanimously will be discussed soon, especially the ones linked to initially ending the government subsidy for some commodities and services.

Opposition Parties Sign Alliance Documents

MM2202114795 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 21 Feb 95 p2

[Report by Hammud Munsir: "The Yemeni Opposition Coalition Pledges To Cooperate With the Authority and Announces The Names of Its Leaderships and Forms Its Central Council"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sanaa—Eleven Yemeni opposition political parties yesterday signed the basic documents of a new opposition alliance to be known as "The Opposition Democratic Coalition" [ODC] [Arabic: Al-'Itilaf Al-Dimokrati Li al- Mu'aradah], the formation of which was announced in Sanaa recently under the leadership of one of the two wings of the Yemeni Ba'th Party (led by Dr. 'Abd-al-Wahhab Mahmud).

The representatives of the parties of the newly formed coalition held a public meeting to sign the documents, in the absence of representatives of one of the wings of the Socialist Party (the Preparatory Committee of the Fourth General Congress), who refused to sign the documents and postponed their participation in the coalition.

The refusal to sign the documents was conveyed in a letter sent by Yahya Hizam al-Sabahi on behalf of the Socialist wing. It said that the opposition coalition should avoid mistakes and should grow in a healthy manner. It warned that "attempts by some to elevate themselves in this national coalition at the expense of the sacrifices and struggles of the others, had no reason in the present stage."

The letter also affirmed that the Socialist Party (the Preparatory Committee) believes that the active forces, by virtue of their ability to influence Yemeni conditions politically and socially, should shoulder their responsibilities in fulfilling the required tasks and that measures should be taken to ensure the preservation, in the new coalition, of the principal forces, which are capable of influencing the masses and possess great political and social presence and enable them to occupy political positions in the leadership of the new opposition coalition.

The Preparatory Committee of the Socialist Party warned against what it called "the imposition of unknown imaginary organizations which do not exist in reality." It added that such an action would weaken the reputation of the coalition and its founding principal parties and their political position.

'Abduh Muhammad al-Jundi, Secretary General of the Nasirite Democratic Party, which is one of the ODC founding members, and who was elected Secretary General of the new Coalition, has stated that the attitude of the Preparatory Committee of the Socialist Party has been a reaction to ODC's leadership structure which was adopted and distributed among the rest of the parties and that it came also as an expression of the Preparatory Committee's discontent at having to share the post of deputy chairman of the OAD with the National Democratic Front, a fact that was affirmed by leading members in the Preparatory Committee. They said in statements to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the Preparatory Committee was being marginalized in the ODC's leadership, despite its political weight and its ability to influence the political street, while imaginary parties, which have no foundation or existence in reality and who are mere names, were being brought forcibly into the ODC.

In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, 'Abduh al-Jundi said the various posts and their distribution among the various parties forming the Coalition were discussed at yesterday's meeting. The parties are as follows.

1. The National Democratic Front. (A splinter wing from the Socialist Party)
2. The Arab Socialist Ba'th Party (Dr 'Abd-al-Wahhab Mahmud's wing)
3. The Nasirite Democratic Party.
4. The Nasirite Popular Corrective Organization.

5. Fatah Unionist Current. (A splinter wing from the Socialist Party)
6. The Liberation Front. (the Popular Organization)
7. Sons of Yemen League. (Wing of 'Uthman al-Madawi in the inside)
8. The Legitimate Sons of Yemen League (Wing of 'Awad al-Bakr)
9. The Socialist Nationalist Party.
10. The Revolutionary Democratic Party (Daghis wing) (This is a political group which had merged with the Yemeni Socialist Party before the Unity)
11. The Islamic Revival Movement. (Wing of Dr Sadiq Sha'if) (after Faris al-Saqqaf's wing had merged with the Yemeni Reform Grouping)

With regard to the absence of the Preparatory Committee of the Fourth General Congress, 'Abduh al-Jundi affirmed that it still has the chance to join the ODC. He left this matter to its leaders to decide, affirming that the new Coalition is open to all who wish to join it provided that such joining should be based on conviction in the "The General National Program" document and the "Basic System."

He also pointed out that agreement was reached during yesterday's meeting on the criteria for choosing the representatives in the ODC's central bodies, which are [as published] the National General Council, which consists of between two and nine members from each party.

As to the motives behind the new opposition grouping, 'Abduh al-Jundi said that it was formed to fill the opposition arena as a complementary part of the political system of the country and was based on a relationship of complementarity and cooperation with the ruling parties, for the sake of the creation of a national alignment that would enable the country to face up to the challenges confronting it, so that the traditional concept of opposition would not continue to dominate the minds of some people, namely, that the opposition must be different from the ruling Authority or on a collision course with the Government. He added that the new Coalition presents a model for the true national opposition, which acts on the basis of its homeland's interests and refuses to be directed from any particular quarter or any foreign power.

He pointed out that one of the most important priorities of the ODC is to work for the creation of a national alignment in what he called "the sovereignty battle in defence of the Homeland."

He said that the new opposition will have a manifesto which the others might agree or disagree with. But the major concern of the opposition is to rectify the administrative and financial conditions in the country on the grounds that they constitute the true measure for steadiness and stability and the lifting of suffering from the shoulders of the people.

He pointed out also that there were several types of problems affecting the general economic conditions in Yemen:

1. The existence of involuntary objective problems, in regard to which the opposition's role would be to support and bolster the Government in its efforts to resolve these problems and implement its program.

2. The existence of administrative problems in the form of financial and administrative corruption as well as the various manifestations of dereliction from which the administration in Yemen has been suffering. This type of problems, he said, occupy a prominent place in the ODC's priorities program, which attaches great importance to them in its criticism, analysis, uncovering, and work to rectify them with responsibility.

The meeting ended with the announcement of the formation of the leadership of the ODC, as follows: 1. Dr 'Abd al-Wahhab Mahmud (from the Ba'th Party)—Chairman.
2. Mas'ad al-Zahiri (from the National Front)—First Deputy Chairman.
3. Second Deputy Chairman (vacant, because of the Socialist Party's refusal to accept it)
4. 'Abduh Muhammad al-Jundi (from the Nasirite Democratic Party)—Secretary General.
5. Husayn 'Abdallah (from the Liberation Front)—Financial Officer.

Tariq 'Aziz Meets Visiting UN Delegation Head

JN2102173595 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz has met with Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the UN Special Commission, and the delegation accompanying him. Lieutenant General Engineer 'Amir Muhammad Rashid, director of the Military Industrialization Organization, attended.

UN's Ekeus: Talks 'Proceeding Well'

JN2102194695 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the UN Special Commission, has said that his talks with Iraqi officials are proceeding well [words indistinct].

In a statement to the Iraqi News Agency this evening, Ekeus added that he has met with Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz and Lieutenant General 'Amir Muhammad Rashid, director of the Military Industrialization Organization. He went on to say that his talks are continuing and (?good).

Defector Warns Ekeus About Hidden Arms

LD2102184795 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1700 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Staff Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i, the former chief of Iraqi military intelligence, has sent an open letter to Rolf Ekeus, head of the UN Iraqi Disarmament Committee, who is at present on a mission in Baghdad.

In the letter, al-Samarra'i again stresses that the ruler of Baghdad still has Scud and Husayn long-range missiles, and that he is keeping them to be used with weapons of mass destruction.

Maj. Gen. al-Samarra'i, who fled from the tyranny of the Baghdad regime and joined the Iraqi opposition, says that missile units have not been disbanded, as claimed by the Iraqi regime.

In his letter to Ekeus, the former chief of Iraqi intelligence stresses that the Baghdad regime has in the past few years handed over to the inspection teams only 49 missiles, and incomplete components and engines, without handing over missile launchers.

Wafiq al-Samarra'i says that information on nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons has been hidden by the Iraqi regime in the homes of some government employees and private houses in Baghdad in order to keep it away from the UN inspection teams.

In his letter, al-Samarra'i urges the head of the special committee not to allow the Baghdad regime to deceive the world again, stressing that the Iraqi regime's possession of internationally banned weapons will be proved in the near future. He says that he will help the UN committee to get to the truth.

Jordanian Business Delegation Arrives for Talks

JN1902152095 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 19 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A delegation of Jordanian businessmen headed by Khaldun Abu-Hassan, chairman of the Amman Chamber of Industry, arrived in Baghdad today on a four-day visit to Iraq.

In a statement to a correspondent of the Iraqi News Agency, Khaldun Abu-Hassan said that during the visit, the delegation, which is comprised of 16 Jordanian businessmen, will hold talks with several Iraqi economic figures on economic and trade issues, and also on the ways to promote economic and trade ties between Iraq and Jordan.

Abu-Hassan added that the delegation will meet with several officials of the competent ministries and the private and mixed sectors in Iraq to discuss with them joint cooperation and complete the discussions the delegation held with Iraqi officials in late November. The talks will also address the possible formation of an Iraqi-Jordanian council of businessmen, Abu-Hassan noted.

Abu-Hassan reiterated that the delegation has brought with it modest amounts of medicines and food supplies as a contribution by the Jordanian businessmen toward alleviating the sufferings of the Iraqi people caused by the continuation of the unfair sanctions clamped on them.

Joint Minutes Signed on 'Projects'

JN2102132295 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0834 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 21 Feb (INA)—The Iraqi Industries Union and a Jordanian trade delegation have signed joint minutes to set up industrial projects between Iraq and Jordan with the participation of the private sector.

In a statement to AL-QADISIYAH, 'Adnan al-Qudsi, head of the Iraqi Industries Union, said the agreement with a Jordanian businessmen delegation specifies the projects to be carried out by the two parties in the fields of industry, food, textiles, and construction.

He said the Jordanian side approved the minutes and was enthusiastic about the agreement. He added that the Jordanian delegation brought along with it some medicine and food to support the steadfastness of the struggling Iraqi people.

He further noted that subcommittees were set up to follow up on the implementation of the agreement and to set a date for a meeting that will be held at the beginning of the last week of March, which coincides with a Jordanian industries exhibition.

UK Businessmen Depart After 'Very Successful' Talks

JN2202110895 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0850 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 22 Feb (INA)—Edmund Sykes, coordinator of the Iraqi-British Interests Group [IBIG] has emphasized that the siege imposed on Iraq has begun to diminish and has failed to realize its political objective of undermining political stability in Iraq.

In a statement to the Iraqi News Agency, Edmund Sykes, heading a team of British businessmen, said that nothing is left of the siege to indicate that it will not end soon, adding that while in Baghdad he saw delegations representing companies from various world countries.

The coordinator of the IBIG described the results of his talks with Iraqi officials as very successful. He said talks were aimed at getting acquainted with the requirements of the Iraqi market in terms of goods, services, and projects in which British companies may contribute.

Edmund Sykes expressed admiration for Iraqi achievements in reconstruction and construction following the 30-state aggression, adding that when he arrived in Baghdad he could not see any signs of the war that had taken place.

Regarding his view of the effects of the siege on the lives of Iraqis, Sykes said he has become acquainted with conditions in hospitals, the acute shortage of medicine and necessary medical equipment, and the adverse effects of this shortage on the health of children and elderly in particular.

He noted that food is not available to most Iraqis because of the high prices. He said the television crew accompanying the delegation has filmed some of the suffering and shot other film that will be shown on British television next week.

He said the IBIG has decided to increase pressure on the popular and official levels in Britain, and will launch a media campaign to acquaint the British public opinion of the tragic situation in Iraq in which the people are punished through food and medicine.

The group will explain to the British Government the amount of economic opportunities available in Iraq for British companies, which will lose an important market if they do not move into it quickly.

Concluding his statement, Sykes said the IBIG intends to form a new delegation of representatives of British companies to visit Iraq every two months. The delegation will include representatives of companies not represented in the current delegation, which comprises representatives of 27 companies.

The delegation left Baghdad this morning at the end of a visit to Iraq that lasted for several days.

Saddam Chairs Cabinet Session on Agriculture

JN2102161095 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1350 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 21 Feb (INA)—His Excellency President Saddam Husayn has said that the value of money is not measured by the existing balance, but rather by its use to generate and yield new benefits to the community and activate various sectors in the economy in order to create additional wealth.

While chairing the ninth session of the Council of Ministers, his excellency the president added that the agricultural and industrial production processes in our country must be continued and exhausted to the maximum possible limit.

His excellency the president ordered the competent authorities to make preparations for the next harvest campaign as of now, to coordinate among themselves, and to follow up on the implementation of this campaign.

The president went on to say: Restraining the use of the requirements of coping with hardship reduces waste and loss and helps the ship reach safe shores, God willing.

At this meeting, the Council of Ministers discussed the topics listed on its agenda, which concern streamlining the agricultural campaign, and made the necessary decisions regarding them.

Ministry Teams Build Bridges, Repair Vehicles

JN2002183195 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 12 Feb 95 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Engineering and technical teams from the al-Anfal Company, which belongs to the Ministry of Housing and Construction, have begun building two floating bridges in al-Hadithah and al-Baghdadi in al-Anbar Governorate.

Making this announcement, company President Hatim 'Ali has said that the bridges, al-Wass and Rabban, are each 150 meters long and 4 meters wide.

Company teams have also completed the Zaghdan Tunnel Bridge in Hadithah. The bridge is 60 meters long and 30 meters wide.

Within the steadfastness campaign being carried out by the Ministry of Housing and Construction to repair vehicles, company teams have repaired 563 vehicles of different types in three workshops in Baghdad, Maysan, and Ninawa Governorates. This is in addition to field teams that repair vehicles at work sites.

Recent Activities of MIO Components Highlighted

Copper Plant Operation Begins

JN1702201495 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 5 Feb 95 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Military Industrialization Organization [MIO] teams have begun experimental operation of a copper wire project at its designed annual production capacity of 40,000 tonnes of highly conductive copper wire.

The manager of the al-Shahid Factory, which implemented the project, said: The teams are currently carrying out experimental production of new, Iraqi-made, 8-mm, oxygen-free copper wire for use in electric cables and motor coils.

The manager said the project, which depends on cathodic copper, includes smelting, casting, and rolling furnaces which have been designed and produced with purely Iraqi expertise for dressing and producing three-high rolls and producing and lining silicon carbide, which is considered a type of refractory brick.

The project manager told an Iraqi News Agency correspondent that the next few weeks will see the production of copper wire which goes into many of our industries and which used to be imported from outside the country. Local markets are currently facing a big shortage of this commodity, he concluded.

Robot, Conveyor Belts Produced

JN1802111495 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 8 Feb 95 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Military Industrialization Organization [MIO] teams in the Automation and Robot Center have succeeded in designing and producing an educational robot of the pivotal [mafsali] type with four movements. Other scientific teams have designed and produced electrical carriages, an automated warehouse, and automatic conveyor belts for a precision foundry work project and a metallurgical project at the Saddam Strategic Industries.

Making this announcement to AL-THAWRAH, center Manager Engineer Khalil Ibrahim al-Asad has said: Our scientific teams, which have previously challenged the unfair blockade by designing and producing the first Iraqi robot under the name of "al-tahaddi" [challenge], have designed and produced a second robot for educational purposes in research centers, institutes, and colleges. The robot is 663 mm high, while its operative arm is 780 mm long. The arm has been designed to operate by both magnetic and air suction methods.

As for the two electrical carriages at the aluminum metallurgical works at the Saddam Industries, they operate automatically and move at a speed of 30 meters per second along the production lines to carry materials. The conveyor belts for the precision foundry work project carry wax molds after dipping.

The manager said: The automated warehouse which we have designed is a highly technical operation. The designs are currently being studied by the beneficiary party prior to implementing the project. It will be the first warehouse of its kind in the region. The warehouse which is being implemented by an Iraqi team will consist of 10,000-20,000 storage places for materials and workw by means of conveyor belts, a robot, and a computerized storage system.

Car Safety Discs Sold Locally

JN1702202995 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic 5 Feb 95 p 12

[FBIS Translated Text] The al-Shahid Factory, a unit of the Military Industrialization Organization [MIO], has for the first time begun manufacturing safty discs, or "Fils," [play-on-words based on discs' resemblance to smallest Iraqi coin, the fil] for all types of car engines.

The factory manager told an Iraqi News Agency correspondent that the factory's first lot of discs, which meet international standards, have been sold in the local market at 50 percent of the current prices.

The manager added that this project, which covers the country's need for this item, will help save large sums of foreign currencies which used to be spent in importing safety discs from abroad. He pointed out that safety disc production depends on brass.

Civil Defense Teams Defuse U.S. Bombs in Ninawa

JN1702124595 Baghdad INA in English 1130 GMT 17 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb 17, INA—The Civil Defence teams in Ninawa province (northern Iraq) have defused 17 U.S.-made round bombs dropped by the U.S.-led coalition aircraft in 1991 on the villages of Tall Kayf district.

Director of the province's Civil Defence said that a search is going on for live bombs, mines, and missiles to deactivate them.

Foreign Teams Assess Damage to Iraqi Oil Facilities

NC2002104695 Paris AFP in English 0942 GMT 20 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Feb 20 (AFP)—Foreign firms have sent teams to Iraq to assess the damage inflicted on its oil facilities in the January-February 1991 Gulf war, the Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) said Monday [20 February].

The technical teams were dispatched mainly by European firms at the invitation of Baghdad which is soliciting help for the reconstruction of existing oil production and export facilities, the Cyprus-based weekly added.

The same firms have also been negotiating with Baghdad the development of new oilfields once the oil embargo imposed by the UN after Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait is lifted, MEES said.

"The general consensus appears to be that, when sanctions are removed, Iraq could reasonably quickly raise production to around two million barrels per day (bpd) with exports in the region of 1.5 million bpd," it said.

"It is however reckoned that it would take at least three years to restore production capacity to its pre-August 1990 level of some 3.5 million bpd."

The specialist newsletter said Baghdad has held talks with a score of companies, the most advanced being with France's Elf Aquitaine and Total, Russia's Lukoil and Italy's Agip for fields in southern Iraq.

"So far, no contract has been signed, although the companies have expressed interest in signing the agreements as soon as possible, even before the sanctions are lifted, with the execution of the contracts to be undertaken after the UN Security Council removes the sanctions," MEES said.

"However, the Iraqi government has so far preferred to wait, seeking to gain better economic terms and attract more companies to participate in the development of the fields, particularly US and British firms."

It said the total cost of developing the four giant fields of Majnun, Nahr 'Umar, West al-Qurnah and Halfaya and repairing facilities in southern Iraq was around 10 billion dollars.

A delegation of British businessmen from 27 companies—including industry, water distribution and road construction—arrived in Baghdad Friday on the first trip to Iraq since the Gulf crisis.

In Baghdad meanwhile, the official news agency INA said a two-day international oil and gas conference would be held in the Iraqi capital on March 13.

"Experts from Arab and international companies and the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) will take part in the conference, as well as representatives of investment banks and the specialised press," the agency said.

UN disarmament chief Rolf Ekeus is in Baghdad for talks on Iraq's compliance with UN resolutions on its military programme. Iraqi leaders are hoping for an easing of sanctions this year.

Talabani Reportedly Presents Cease-Fire Proposal

TA2102181095 Ankara TRT Television Network in Turkish 1600 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] While the clashes between the groups waging a power struggle in northern Iraq continue, the group belonging to Jalal Talabani has asked for a cease-fire. The Iraqi Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, headed by Talabani, issued a statement and proposed to leave Irbil in exchange for a withdrawal of the units belonging to Mas'ud Barzani, leader of the Iraqi Kurdish Democratic Party, from the area surrounding Irbil.

Over 100 persons were killed in clashes that escalated in recent days around Rawandoz, which is under the control of Talabani's forces. Forces belonging to Talabani and Barzani have been clashing frequently in a bid to expand their spheres of influence, despite their agreement two years ago on equal representation in the local parliament.

Barzani Radio Denies Secret Contacts With Government

JN1802093395 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 0500 GMT 18 Feb 95

[Statement issued by KDP political bureau spokesman; place and date not given—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its issue dated 14 February, the Ankara TURKISH DAILY NEWS says in an article on the visit to Turkey by the Iraqi regime's Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf that the talks in Ankara demonstrated that the Iraqis have connections with Barzani.

For the sake of the truth, we would like to say the following:

1. The Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] announces that it held negotiations with the successive Iraqi governments on the national rights of our Kurdish people and our Iraqi people's democratic rights in an open manner and not secretly. In the future also, our party will not hold any secret negotiations or discussions with any Iraqi government.

2. The Patriotioc Union of Kurdistan's demagogic trumpets have started to issue instigations and add its own [words indistinct] forgetting that Talabani and no one else affirmed that he was considering the latest Iraqi regime's initiative for dialogue. This is what he announced and God knows what the regime had told [words indistinct] his consideration.

However, we have numerous pieces of evidence [words indistinct] via Mosul [name indistinct] in [word indistinct], Chamchamal, and other areas. This [word indistinct] is not new. It began during the recent fighting [word indistinct] last summer and assumed bigger and wider proportions during the recent Patriotic Union of Kurdistan's military (?coup). This has not been done gratis.

Paper Views 'Violent' Kurdish Fighting in Irbil

JN1702173395 Baghdad AL-'IRAQ in Arabic 9 Feb 95 pp 1,6

[AL-'IRAQ follow-up report]

[FBIS Translated Text] A few days ago, one of the sons of our Kurdish people described the situation in the city of Irbil as a hand grenade whose safety pin had been pulled out and was about to explode. The reason was that the city was armed to the teeth both from within and without. the sounds of shooting and explosions could be heard everywhere, and the people spoke only about the killings and burglaries which were taking place day and night.

This description has become a reality as expected. Battles have erupted violently between the Kurdish people's enemies, who are fighting solely for their personal interests and the aims of their allied states which are hostile to Iraq; the Iraq of Kurds, Arabs, and all minorities; the Iraq of the March Declaration on autonomy.

Confirmed reports over the past few days say the enemies of the Kurdish people were planning new battles, that agent Jalal Talabani was reinforcing the position of his armed men inside the city of Irbil, and that Mas'ud Barzani was assembling his armed men to tighten the siege of the city and to block the road to al- Sulaymaniyah in order to maintain the siege on agent Jalal's armed men in the city of Irbil, which was under artillery fire.

It seems the enemies of the Kurdish people have completed their preparations; the time has come for the hand grenade to explode. Thus violent battles have broken out in Irbil as reported by news agencies. This violent outbreak means more weapons will be used and that there will be more dead among the sons of our Kurdish people in Irbil, which has become a city of grief. The historical city of Irbil, which is known for the religious rituals held in its grand mosques, especially during the month of Ramadan, has lost all its aura and beauty.

The Kurdish citizen, who is imprisoned in his home, wonders about the reasons for these battles and his interest in what is going on, but cannot find any convincing justifications. The battles are taking place between Jalal and Mas'ud for personal interests, leadership, and theft of property. All that has nothing to do with the interest of the Kurdish citizen, who has lost all the needs of life.

The agents are not satisfied with the fighting, but have begun carrying out continuous executions of the sons of our Kurdish people. Execution sentences have been carried out in the city of Irbil by the orders of agent Jalal and his agent disciple Kosrat against several Kurdish citizens under different charges. On the other hand, agent Mas'ud has imposed death sentences on citizens in the city of Dahuk. The news media of both agents carried reports on these executions during the past few days. The radio of the enemy of the Kurdish people, agent Jalal, carried a report on 7 February 1995 saying: "The capitulatory leadership of the party [Democratic Party of Kurdistan], which trades with the crucial issue of our Kurdish people, does not hesitate to resort to different inhuman and cowardly methods in order to achieve its mean aims."

This is how agent Jalal speaks about the enemies and traitors of the Kurdish people. The news bulletins which are released by agent Mas'ud, broadcast over his radio, contain evidence and information on the treason of agent Jalal and his hostile actions against our Kurdish people, including daily crimes against Kurdish citizens. The city of Irbil and its population shall remain history's witnesses to these crimes.

Let us go back to what agent Jalal says about executions on his radio. He says: "Reports coming from the Bahdinan region indicate the capitulatory leadership of the party has decided to execute four persons in the prison of Dahuk—which belongs to Mas'ud's repressive security organ, the Parastan—on feeble charges."

It is clear that this agent is executing and that agent is also arresting and executing and that the motive is personal interests. Those who are being executed are sons of our Kurdish people who happen to be under the mercy of these agents, with the support of the Americans and all the enemies of Iraq and the autonomy. This calls on all honest Kurds to take action in order to resist the hostile plan against our Kurdish people and the Kurdistan autonomous regime. They should do so with their hands, tongues, and pens so no one will lag behind in the struggle to expel the foreigner and the agents who are associated with him. What every Kurd should do is apply the prophet's tradition which says: Whoever sees a wrong doing should try to change it with his hand, if he cannot, then with his tongue, and if he cannot, then with his heart, which is the least he should do.

Kurdish Personalities Welcome Cabinet Initiative

JN1802171295 Baghdad INA in English 1455 GMT 18 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb 18, INA—A number of Kurdish personalities have hailed the Iraqi cabinet's initiative to restore security and stability to the Autonomous Region of northern Iraq.

They told AL-'IRAQ daily that the initiative has exposed the pretexts of those who seek to satisfy the imperialist states that do not want the Kurdish people to be prosperous and stable.

Secretary of the Social Affairs Department of the Autonomous Region Sagfan Husayn said the initiative constitutes the best remedy for the tragic conditions in the Iraqi Kurdistan region.

Meanwhile, Secretary of Resorts and Municipalities Ahmad Muhammad said security can not be restored without the return of the central authority and the departure of the foreign occupation troops.

Secretary of Housing and Construction Ghandi Muhammad Hasan said the initiative has come in the right time to end the suffering of the Kurdish people who have been under the control of the warring factions.

Hizballah: Operations Not Aimed at Capturing Rawanduz

LD1802175195 Tehran IRNA in English 1458 GMT 18 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Naqadeh, W Azerbaijan Prov., Feb. 18, IRNA—A spokesman for Iraq's revolutionary Hizballah announced here Saturday [18 February] that the recent operations launched in northern Iraqi city of Rawanduz were not aimed at capturing the city.

He added that forces loyal to his party managed to achieve all their predetermined goals.

According to reports fresh clashes have erupted between Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Iraqi Hizballah on the one hand and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) forces since over the past two weeks.

Meanwhile, PUK has announced that its forces had succeeded in repelling attacks launched to capture Rawanduz, whereas Hizballah sources underline that no attack had been made with a motivation to capture Rawanduz.

The Hizballah spokesman announced that just 70 KDP and Hizballah peshmergas had successfully launched demolishing operations.

He added that PUK sustained 58 casualties in the wake of the clashes, among whom commander of its special batallion, Mr. 'Aziz Feqyani.

Furthermore, he said that six PUK armed forces had been taken captive, along with over 30 being injured.

He underscored that Hizballah and KDP coalition forces have now heights in the vicinity of Rawanduz under their control.

Earlier, the PUK had declared that 200 out of a total of 70,000 of KDP and Hizballah coalition forces had been killed and that the rival forces in return had shelled Rawanduz.

However, Hizballah spokesman severely denied the reports and said his forces had issued transit permits for shippment of 100 tons of foodstuffs to Rawanduz despite the fact that the city had been sieged.

The source called as mere "rumor" reports on "attacks to capture Rawanduz" and said PUK by spreading such a rumor wanted to diminish the importance of the operation launched by Hizballah and KDP at Rawanduz suburbs.

Kurdish sources recently announced that PUK have mobilized its forces to launch nationwide attacks ranging from Kurdistan capital city of Erbil to Rawanduz, which is now under Hizballah's control.

A large number of the belligerent sides' forces have been either killed or injured as a result of the clashes, but no exact report is yet available on the death tolls.

The Hizballah spokesman concluded that Jalal Talebani's forces have suffered defeat in all pivots.

'Prominent' Shaykh on Struggle for Leadership of Shiites

MM1602121795 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 15 Feb 95 p 10

[Interview with Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi al-Khalisi, "a prominent Iraqi Shiite figure," by 'Adnan Husayn in London; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Husayn] There is currently a struggle over the post of highest authority for the Shiites. How do you view this struggle? And how important is this post?

[Al-Khalisi] The authority actually means that most [religious] interpreters should submit to the leadership of the more knowledgeable, pious, and experienced interpreter. According to prevalent phrases, this means the following: recognizing the highest leadership of the interpreter that is more conscientious, knowledgeable, sincere, and active in the area of looking after the nation's affairs and interests. It also means detecting the enemies' ambitions and decisively confronting any plans harmful to the nation's interests. [passage omitted]

[Husayn] Do you believe that the current struggle has political, regional, and nationalist dimensions?

[Al-Khalisi] The Islamic concept of the authority suggestts that the struggle over it should not be political, regional, or nationalist in nature. Because an authority that is committed to the magnanimous Shari'ah looks after the Islamic nation's affairs without any nationalist, regional, or even sectarian divisions.

[Husayn] And does the struggle have an economic (financial) dimension?

[Al-Khalisi] The economic dimension of the struggle—if there is any—falls in the framework of the efforts exerted to exploit the authority post to achieve sectarian interests. These orientations are alien to the nature of a good authority. [passage omitted]

[Husayn] What is your position on the efforts exerted in Iran to consolidate 'Ali Khamene'i as the highest authority for the Shiites?

[Al-Khalisi] There is nothing wrong with these efforts as long as Khamene'i meets the required conditions. They are acceptable efforts as long as those making them are convinced of them, and provided they are made in accordance with the legitimate rules, not through dictation and compulsion. However, this has been negated by Khamene'i's announcement of his pullout and decision not to run for the authority post—which is a wise position worthy of praise and appreciation. It reflects awareness and sincerity. [passage omitted]

[Husayn] Do you believe that Montazeri enjoys sufficient support in the seminaries to enable him to assume the authority post, given there is no official approval of him?

[Al-Khalisi] Without doubt his eminence enjoys widespread popular support in Iran. This popular support has grown since his political rivals provoked the known media clamor against him, trying to incite the masses against his principled positions and reformist ideas. This support has been reinforced by the support of prominent scholars and thinkers in the seminaries and at the universities. [passage omitted]

Daily Predicts 'Removal' of U.S. From Economic 'Throne'

JN2102063395 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 10 Feb 95 p 3

[Article by Dr. 'Adnan Mannati: "After Four Years of Aggression, Have U.S. Economic Aims Been Achieved?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] When the conflict is at the level of a great historic battle, such as the immortal Mother of Battles; that is, between a nation which seeks awakening and unification under the leadership of Saddam Husayn's Iraq, and criminal forces led by the United States which seek to usurp the factors of this awakening and unification and threaten the very existence and future of the Arab nation, the arena and time frame of the conflict are no longer measured by the area of a battlefield or the duration of a specific confrontation, but they go beyond that to longer place and time dimensions which extend until the conflict is finally determined.

After four years of 30-state aggression on Iraq and four years or more of unfair blockade, the aims of the aggression and the barbaric and savage nature of the United States have become clear.

When we read what is being written about the 30-state aggression in the imperialist West, including the United States, we observe that the writers are unanimous that the aims of the U.S.-Zionist aggression were essentially geared toward achieving U.S. domination of oil resources in the Arab Gulf region and guaranteeing the security of the Zionist entity. In order to achieve those aims, it became essential to strike at Iraq and try to destroy and mutilate its power.

Regarding the fate of the evil aim of guaranteeing the security of the Zionist entity after four years of aggression on Iraq, whose missiles had penetrated and shattered this security, we observe that this aim is colliding with mounting Palestinian national resistance and jihad against Zionist occupation despite the capitulatory plans which have taken place. This is because the acts of jihad by this resistance are nourished by the spirit of the Mother of Battles. Thus, the security of this entity is no longer guaranteed after it had been penetrated by Iraqi missiles four years ago, and the internal walls of this entity have started cracking under the forceful arms of Palestinian revolutionaries and mujahidin.

Regarding the fate of the other evil aim, which is U.S. domination of oil resources in order to guarantee the hostile economic aims of the United States, it can be known by defining the aims of both sides in the conflict; namely, Iraq and the United States, and analyzing the movement of that conflict during the past four or five years.

Let us begin with Iraq. Its economic aims on the national level are summed up as follows: First, protecting its wealth, including its oil resources; second, achieving independent development; third, assuming its pan-Arab responsibility; fourth, adopting the socialist economic option to guarantee social justice; and fifth, and in the phase of the Mother of Battles, overcoming the blockade with the least possible cost.

Iraq's economic aims on the pan-Arab level are summed up as follows: First, fair distribution of the nation's wealth after its liberation; second, investment of the nation's wealth within the Arab homeland; third, using this wealth to achieve independent development for the nation which serves as a basic pillar for its awakening; and four, this wealth, especially oil resources, should be a weapon for the nation in its crucial battle for the sake of the higher pan-Arab interests.

Iraq's economic aims on the humanitarian level are summed up as follows: First, putting an end to exploitation in international economic relations; second, establishing fair and equal economic relations between world states; third, unifying the economic stands of Third World countries to prevent exploitation and usurpation by the imperialist West; and fourth, tackling economic problems resulting from the imperialist West's domination of international economic relations, such as indebtedness.

On the other hand, U.S. economic aims from the aggression on Iraq are summed up as follows: First, guaranteeing continued U.S. domination of oil resources in the Arab Gulf region in order to deprive the Arab nation of an important wealth and weapon in the pan-Arab battle and contemporary Arab awakening; second, guaranteeing U.S. success in the economic war against its main rivals, such as Japan and Germany; and third, tackling U.S. economic problems.

The achievement of the economic aims of the aggression would mean that Iraq has to change its aims with new ones which, on the one hand, would not conflict with but serve U.S. aims, and on the other enable the United States to achieve all the above three economic aims.

It will be observed that during the past four years on the Iraqi level:

1. Iraq has protected its oil wealth from U.S. domination. This wealth has remained in the hands of the people as a national and pan-Arab wealth to be used when Arab and international circumstances are opportune. Thus, Iraq has continued to adhere to the principles of the nationalization victory which it created in 1972-1973. Iraq will not abandon the meanings of this victory, especially using oil resources in the service of independent development now that it has topped the list of states with oil reserves between 280 and 360 billion barrels, according to the 1994 estimates.

2. Iraq has adhered to independent national development which strengthens national and pan-Arab security; in other words, it has adhered to the requirements of national and pan-Arab security plus economic progress, especially in the agricultural and industrial sectors and in promoting national production with local resources, and

to the bases of the new economic, industrial, and agricultural development process which will follow the end of the unfair blockade.

3. Iraq has adhered to pan-Arab responsibility in national development. It has never abandoned this responsibility, being one of the requirements of Arab economic building and one of the weapons for confronting economic plans which are hostile to the nation such as the Middle Eastern market and the Gaza-Jericho agreement.

4. Iraq has adhered to the socialist economic system and to foiling U.S. plans to impose market economy on economic life, believing that this system wastes resources, conflicts with sovereignty, and leads to subservience.

5. Iraq has gone through the unique experience of reconstructing what has been destroyed by the 30-state military aggression and the chapter of treachery and treason, which has affected 84 percent of the economic, productive, and services projects, building an economic edifice in the industrial, agricultural, and irrigation sector, and laying the foundations for the coming economic development process in the post-blockade period. This experience has taken place with local capabilities and expertise and within record times despite the conditions of the blockade.

In the industrial sector, factories have been built for new local industries such as the manufacture of machines and equipment for the production process. In the agricultural and irrigation sector, new rivers have been opened up, such as Saddam River, and new lands have been reclaimed for agriculture. In the services sector, new cultural landmarks have been built with local resources such as the two-tier Saddam Bridge and Saddam Tower. In the housing sector, new residential areas have been built such as Saddamiyat al-Karkh. And, in order to reorganize consumer services under the principle of social justice and to cope with the unfair blockade, Iraq has adopted the ration card system which has enabled it to face all these circumstances with the least possible cost and with available local resources. Iraq's experience in facing the blockade, especially through the use of this card, has been a unique example of how to reorganize local resources and achieve social justice despite the negative effects of the blockade. The people's steadfastness, patience, and ability to adjust to a new economic situation and the wisdom of their historical leadership in confronting the blockade through national prudence, maturity, and effective measures; all these have foiled the aggressors' aim to prolong the unfair blockade.

It has been observed on the Arab level during the past four years that:

1. Every Arab citizen has upheld the economic slogans of the Mother of Battles, especially by resisting the unfair distribution of wealth, the investment of the nation's wealth and resources in the imperialist states, and the wasting of Arab oil resources at the hands of some Arab rulers. The sons of the Arab nation realize that unfair distribution of wealth conflicts with the right of economic equality among the sons of the nation, which is a legitimate and natural right that is justified by pan-Arab affiliation. Such distribution under agent regimes, which are allied with the imperialist West, could lead to a class struggle between the Arab countries due to the concentration and monopoly of wealth in some of these countries and the different levels of economic developments in the Arab homeland. For instance, the individual's share from the Gross Domestic Product in the United Arab Emirates is 12.3 times that of an individual in Egypt. The income per capita in Saudi Arabia is 14 times that in Egypt, and the income per capital in Kuwait is 18.6 times that in Somalia and 15.3 times that in Sudan. Harvard University Professor Steve Lukman [name as transliterated] confirms that by saying: The oil wealth in the Gulf has not led to any real economic development or investment, but to the entrenchment of the beneficiary minority governments. I believe that in the long term the people will reach the conclusion that it is essential to change this situation which is due to bad distribution of wealth.

The sons of the nation also realize that the continued existence of Arab rulers who are linked to the imperialist West, leads to further squandering and weakening of national resources and strengthening of the enemies, especially through the investment of oil revenues in the states of the imperialist West while the countries of the Arab homeland are burdened with heavy debts and the volume of inter-Arab investments is barely seven percent of the total investments.

2. The Mother of Battles has awakened Arab consciousness and made the sons of the nation, including those in the Arab Gulf region, realize that their assets in U.S. banks and their investments which at one time exceeded $750 billion will not return to them, because they are now part of the economic cycle in the United States and contribute to running the U.S. economy. The sons of the nation also realize that the continued subservience of the Arab Gulf regimes to the United States has become a heavy burden for the economies of these countries, especially in financing the continuous U.S.-Zionist aggression and unjust blockade against Iraq. It has cost these economies vast sums of money. For instance, the Saudi regime is estimated to have paid $65 billion toward the aggression. The Kuwaiti rulers have also paid an equal sum. The stockpiling of arms and military hardware in some of the Arab Gulf countries is costing their economies tens of billions of dollars. Some sources have estimated the cost at $200 billion. This is in addition to squandering oil by offering it as a gift to the United States or as a bribe to other states to make them maintain their hostile attitudes toward the Iraqi people.

By pursuing this policy, which serves the imperialist West and is hostile to the nation, some of the Gulf regimes have been burdened with heavy debts which were estimated at more than $103 billion in 1993, including $55 billion in foreign debts.

3. The Mother of Battles has alerted the sons of the nation to the different methods of economic warfare which is being waged against their nation's existence and future, especially the economic plans which have been formulated by Zionist and U.S. research centers, such as the domination of the private sector, which is linked to the West, over economic life and the curtailment of the role of the state in economic life or what is termed privatization. The Mother of Battles has also alerted the sons of the nation to the danger of the domination of the market economy system over economic life, which is a U.S. strategy against the developing countries. It has also alerted the sons of the nation to the dangers of the so-called Middle Eastern market, which will be directed first against Arab economic activity, then pan-Arab identity, and later Arab existence.

Thus, the Mother of Battles has revealed the dangers of all these hostile systems against the nation and has awakened the nation to the truth that its existence depends on its ability to adhere to the slogans of the Mother of Battles and resist the U.S. and Zionist forces of aggression which seek to divide the nation.

It has been observed on the international economic level during the past four years:

1. That the slogans of the Mother of Battles have prevented U.S. extortion of other states and called for a system of international economic relations which guarantees justice and equality. They have also called for tackling the economic problems resulting from the imperialist West's domination of the resources of the developing states, especially the issue of debts. Moreover, they have called for the right of peoples to have their own economic and political options according to their own views and needs. Some peoples in this world have managed to make a breakthrough, which means that Iraq has succeeded in conveying its slogans to other nations.

2. That regarding the U.S. aim to guarantee its domination of oil resources in the region—especially since U.S. oil reserves which are estimated at about 32.1 billion barrels, or 3.2 pecent of the world oil reserves, and are not expected to last more than 10 years, compared to the Gulf oil reserves which are estimated at 700 billion barrels, or 70 percent of the world reserves, and are expected to last about 100 years—these resources, with the exception of the Iraqi oil, are still under U.S. control with regard to producion, pricing, and marketing, whether through the monopolies or the U.S. Administration. But the new development is that the sons of the nation in this region now realize the danger of this control and the presence of U.S. fleets in order to dominate the region. This domination is now cracking, thanks to awareness of the sons of the nation and their resistence to it and to their humble subservient rulers.

The Mother of Battles has alerted, and in fact instigated, the sons of the nation in this region against the dangers of continued U.S. domination under the agent rulers.

3. That regarding the U.S. aim of succeeding in the economic war against its main rivals, such as Japan and Germany, and dominating the resources of other states which compete with it for the international throne, such as Russia, China, and France, the effect of the Mother of Battles during the past four years is that it has made the peoples of these states, and most of their governments, become aware of the U.S. war against them and thus understand the need to confront the United States economically, stop being subservient to it, and thus block its politicl will and decisions.

These states have realized that they, too, are a target of the conspiracy of aggression against Iraq, especially through the economic embargo on Iraq, whether by what they paid toward the cost of the 30-state aggression, or by the economic burdens which they shouldered following the suspension of their economic dealings with Iraq, or by U.S. pressure on their economies. This is in addition to facing other economic problems, such as unemployment and inflation. This realization has led to stands which are opposed to the United States such as the U.S.-Japanese trade war, the economic rapprochement between Japan and China, the diversion of part of Japanese investments in the United States, the economic rapprochement between Russia and China, Russian realization that U.S. economic aid is an illusion which is aimed at splitting Russia under humiliating U.S. terms, and Western Europe's realization in particular that its future economic unity and unified currency is an inevitable necessity for confronting the United States. The establishment of a unifed European currency means the collapse of the U.S. currency, the dollar.

Thus, the Mother of Battles has caused cracks in the wall of the forces of aggression during the past four years and created new relations between U.S. rivals. The beginning of the next century will witness, amid the rivalry of these forces, the removal of the United States from the international economic throne and the emergence of new superpowers, thus ending the U.S. role of the world policeman. In light of what we have said, and due to its savage and barbaric aggression against Iraq and unfair embargo on its people, the United States has gained nothing but more cracks on its economic edifice, which heralds its collapse as an exclusive world power in the next few years.

Columnist Urges 'Economic State of Emergency'

JN1702170295 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic 9 Feb 95 p 12

["Above the Red Line" column by Shihab al-Tamimi: "Economic State of Emergency"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The current situation in local markets, where the price of food continues to increase arbitrarily, demands a search for solutions and remedies. We can only achieve that by calm, serious, profound, and objective discussion. In that context, we want to make the following proposals:

- The people continue to wonder about their fate and future while they go through this most unusual inflation and spiralling prices; they are eager to find a solution that will save them from present and future harm due to continuous increases in prices.

- We may not be able to crystallize a proposed economic state of emergency into a single formula now, within this small column, since there are different ways of applying it, but the idea is essentially based on declaring complete state control of the production, importation, and marketing of foodstuffs; the adoption of "joint management" by the state and the owners of establishments where these foodstuffs are produced and traded, and the formulation of a production, importation, marketing, and pricing system through the cooperation of the state and the parties concerned in the private sector that will guarantee the common interests of both the parties concerned and the citizens.

- The proposed economic state of emergency should be an affirmation of the state's responsibility to control the sources of people's livelihood under the harsh conditions experienced by our people due to the blockade and theprofiteers. Profiteers have exploited the blockade for their personal interests, throwing overboard all other considerations. We do not want to explain in detail the harm being done to consumer citizens as a result of avaricious practices in the markets. But the deterioration of the situation calls for a serious and profound search for solutions and remedies. Perhaps a call for a declaration of an economic state of emergency in the basic foodstuffs sector falls within the context of this search for solutions which will ensure sufficient bread for the people. The profiteers have gone too far in their exploitation. The state has no choice but to take on this urgent deterrent role in order to protect citizens from the results of the unfair blockade.

By its authority, departments, and legislative powers, the state is the most qualified to pilot the ship of salvation and to ensure bread, safety, and justice for Iraqi citizens. Thanks to the state, the existing foodstuffs and materials could ensure for the citizens the means of a better livelihood under the conditions of the blockade and spare them any further suffering.

German Paper Reports Contacts With Iran for Arad Release

TA2002184395 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 20 Feb 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The German paper FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE reports in tomorrow's edition that Israeli navigator Ron Arad is alive and well and being held by the Iranians and that negotiations between Israel and Iran over his release have reached a critical stage. According to the paper, the negotiations are being conducted through the mediation of the German security authorities. The paper further reports that the Iranians recently relayed to Israel a videocassette and a letter from Ron Arad which prove that they are holding the navigator.

Our monitor Mikha'el Gurdus, who first sent this report to us, adds that, according to the paper, Tami Arad visited Bonn several times recently in connection with these negotiations. The report notes that the contacts between Israel and Iran also deal with Hizballah's activities in Lebanon and the possibility that Israel may sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT].

Security sources in Israel told our correspondent Alon Ben-David that Israel has indeed been holding contacts with several elements to secure Ron Arad's release but, according to them, no breakthrough has been achieved yet. [passage omitted]

[Jerusalem Television Channel 2 Network in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 20 February carries a similar report, adding that "sources in the prime minister's bureau told our political correspondent that they have heard nothing about such a development in the Ron Arad affair."]

Rabin Confirms Germany-Iran Contacts

TA2102133195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] This morning, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin denied the report in the German paper, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE, according to which a recording or a letter from Ron Arad had been received. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that Mr. Rabin noted that contacts are indeed being held between Germany and Iran, but they have not yet yielded any real results with regard to the captive navigator's whereabouts in terms of clarifying whether he is alive. We assume, the prime minister said, that Ron Arad is alive and is being held by Iran, which is responsible for his fate.

Security Sources Critical of Germany

TA2202075895 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Security sources involved in the matter of Israeli missing and imprisoned servicemen say they are sharply critical of Germany. The sources say that if the Germans would be determined in their contacts with Iran on the issue of Ron Arad, including making continued ties with Tehran contingent upon his return, there would have been results. The security sources confirmed that there are contacts between Israel and Germany on the subject, but say that the Bonn government is taking a lenient approach to the Iranians, including doing large-scale business with Tehran.

Spokesman: Peres' Egypt Visit 'To Find Compromise'

NC2202092095 Paris AFP in English 0801 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Jerusalem, Feb 22 (AFP)—Foreign Minister Shimon Peres goes to Cairo on Thursday [23 February] seeking to compromise in the Israeli-Egyptian crisis over the renewal of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the foreign ministry said.

"We are convinced that both sides will do their utmost to reduce tensions, which are negative for the peace process," spokesman Yigal Palmor told AFP.

"We will not sign the treaty but we will try to find a compromise acceptable to both countries."

Peres was invited by Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and will also meet Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa amid the worst crisis in relations between the two countries since Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin was due to see Peres on Wednesday to finalize Israel's position, officials said. [passage omitted]

Sources Note Egyptian Envoy Recalled

TA2102191095 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 21 Feb 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres will meet with President Mubarak in Cairo on 23 February in an additional attempt to resolve the crisis around Israel's refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT], as Egypt is demanding.

At the same time, our political correspondent Gadi Sukenik reports that Egyptian Ambassador to Israel Muhammad Basyuni, who left for Cairo six days ago, has not yet returned to Israel. Egyptian sources told our correspondent that the ambassador was recalled for consultations the day Mubarak strongly criticized Israel over the NPT issue. Senior Israeli sources are saying that the ambassador's failure to return, even if the reason for it is not being stated officially, is an indication of the seriousness of the crisis.

Beilin on Egypt's NPT Activities, Syrian Stance

TA2202151895 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1100 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres is flying to Cairo today for talks tomorrow with

President Husni Mubarak over the dispute between the two countries on the issue of nuclear nonproliferation. Reporter Jack Katzenell asked Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin if Egypt's diplomatic activity on this issue poses a threat to Israeli security.

[Begin recording] [Beilin] No, it's not at all a threat to our security. It is, of course, irritating us and we hope that it will be possible to put an end to this misunderstanding and to this kind of conflict that we have with the Egyptians now. Egypt is the cornerstone of the peace process, and it is very important for us to have good and smooth relations with this country.

[Katzenell] Is Egypt's activity with regard to the other Arab countries on the background of this nuclear dispute holding up the peace process? Is it really delaying relationships between Israel and other Arab countries which don't have relations with Israel so far?

[Beilin] I don't think so. I believe that the different national interests of the Arab countries are stronger than this issue of the NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty]. It may be more important for Egypt than other countries; it has been its visional policy all these years and it became a more significant issue toward the conference on the continuation of the NPT. I hope that once this issue is solved this way or another during the conference, it will not become a significant hurdle on our way to the continuation of the process.

[Katzenell] Doesn't it indicate that Egypt has decided that the cold peace which it has with Israel is really warm enough and doesn't want any more?

[Beilin] I hope not. I believe that what they are doing now is a continuation of their traditional policy. It is not something new and it is not a wish to cool the relations between us.

[Katzenell] Lastly, have you lost hope of an agreement with Syria in the near future?

[Beilin] Not at all. I'm still hopeful because I believe that the common denominator between us is the largest one ever, and I hope that against this background it will be possible to have peace with them. It is true that I questioned today the strategic policy, the strategic decision to make peace with us. What we have to do is to verify that their decision is really a strategic one. And, if this is the case, I believe that peace is possible between the two countries and it refers to negotiations just of some months now.

[Katzenell] But you indicated that you don't believe that they have made a strategic decision to make peace with Israel.

[Beilin] I'm saying that their policy doesn't prove necessarily that this is the case. [end recording]

Beilin on Possible Ross Visit, Syria Track

TA2202085795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 22 Feb 95

[Telephone interview with Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin by Me'ir Einstein; place not given—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Einstein] What do you think is the Syrians' top priority if not the return of the Golan Heights?

[Beilin] The truth is that I do not know. I do not know what Syria's ambitions are about the Golan Heights or about its readiness for peace. I think, however, that our conviction in recent years that Syria has already made a strategic decision about peace and that it is only a question of timing raises some doubts because Syrian behavior in recent months is not that of somebody who has really made an unequivocal decision for peace and is ready to do everything it can to arrive at such a situation.

Declarations like the prime minister's remark that the depth of the withdrawal will depend on the depth of the peace—which is very significant for the Syrians—and a readiness to uproot settlements did not bring the Syrians to negotiate, and they are still playing games about whether their ambassador in Washington will attend talks with our ambassador. If that is the situation, other things might be topping Syrian priorities. Their aim might be to prove to the world, especially the Americans and perhaps the Europeans, that they are fulfilling some sort of role in the peace process, although they are not participating in the multilaterals and although the negotiations are not intensive. Since they are part of the negotiations, they can be considered a member of the international club, and the arms embargo imposed on them can be lifted—as the Europeans have already done—without Damascus' really intending to reach an agreement with us and without receiving a territorial prize in return for such an accord. They understand that peace with Israel puts them in a very different position in the Arab world. They will no longer be a confrontation state; they will no longer receive Iranian sympathy and all that entails, and that might be a price they are unwilling to pay.

[Einstein] Let us assume for a moment that the question marks you have brought up will become exclamation marks. What would Israel do then?

[Beilin] I do not think that it calls for a change in our policy. In my view, we have adopted a correct policy. We did not agree to a prior announcement that we are prepared to give up the Golan Heights, as the Syrians have been demanding, because we want to hold intensive negotiations with them in a very serious fashion in order to reach an agreed-upon solution. On the other hand, we made statements of principle about our readiness for peace and territorial concessions, which should have brought them to the negotiating table. If they are now unprepared to come to the negotiating table, I think we have at least made one achievement: Nobody in the world now questions our readiness to go a long way to reach peace with them.

[Einstein] We heard that Washington will decide whether to dispatch an emissary, Dennis Ross, to the Middle East to try to advance the Israeli-Syrian negotiations. In view of what you have just said, is there any point at this stage in sending an American emissary?

[Beilin] I do not think a price will be asked for dispatching such an envoy. I think the more we talk the better, but the time might have come for a more thorough investigation and understanding of what motivates the Syrians and how progress can be made, perhaps using a different procedure. The current negotiations, or non-negotiations, are leading to a situation whereby we will not reach peace with the Syrians in 1995 because it is moving at a snail's pace. Therefore, if we can arrive at some other procedure with the Syrians, on the assumption that they have really made a strategic decision and not merely a tactical decision to appear to be peace loving, I would definitely study the option of a procedural change. Otherwise, it might be important to reveal the Syrian position to the world.

[Einstein] To conclude, I would like to ask you about the cabinet reshuffle and reports about a ministerial appointment in a few months.

[Beilin] I promise you that I am not waiting for a ministerial appointment with a stopwatch. I would be very happy to fulfill my present job for the full term. I did not speak with the man who decides who will become ministers, and he never spoke with me about it. He has not offered me anything, and he has not authorized me to say anything on the matter.

[Einstein] What did you hear from Shim'on Peres?

[Beilin] I think only one person will decide; therefore, as long as he does not say anything I will not be able to do so.

[Einstein] You did not hear anything from him?

[Beilin] No.

New Policy Says Nuclear-Free Zone 2 Years After Peace

TA2102095395 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 21 Feb 95 p A1

[Report by political correspondent Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel will strive to create a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East two years after signing bilateral peace agreements with all countries in the region, including Iran. Concurrent with regional disarmament, Israel will agree to consider joining international arms control treaties, including the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT].

This is the new Israeli policy on the nuclear issue that Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres presented to his Egyptian counterpart 'Amr Musa in their meeting in Paris on Friday. Thus, Israel has, for the first time, agreed to cite a timetable for the nuclear disarmament of the region. Egypt demanded that Israel present a timetable rather than suffice with a declaration in principle about its willingness to carry out disarmament "after the establishment of stable peace arrangements."

Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin approved the wording of the statement formulated by the Foreign Ministry in a meeting held prior to Peres' departure for Paris. The session was also attended by David 'Ivri, the Defense Ministry director general, who heads the Israeli steering committee on arms control. Rabin apparently rejected another Foreign Ministry proposal to enter into practical discussions now on the nuclear disarmament of the region within the framework of the multilateral talks on arms control. Egypt raised a similar demand in the talks.

Senior Israeli officials say that "the new formula is a gesture that does not alter our fundamental policy but give a better outward appearance. It is a new presentation of formulas and declarations that we have voiced in the past. In any event, we will not be signing the NPT soon." Peres, who has been trying to reach a compromise with the Egyptians on the nuclear issue, said in internal deliberations that he attaches great importance to settling the dispute which, if not contained, could adversely affect the entire peace process.

Robert Einhorn, the U.S. State Department official in charge of the arms control talks, will visit Israel in early March. His mission is meant to ally the tension and examine ways to break the impasse over the formulation of a regional declaration of principles caused by the disagreement between Egypt and Israel. The nuclear issue will also feature prominently during U.S. Vice President Al Gore's visit to the region in March.

Peres Says Netzarim Should Be Evacuated

TA2102172995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres has reiterated that the settlement of Netzarim should be evacuated because it serves as a point of confrontation and friction, creates numerous problems, and contributes nothing.

According to Peres, the security arrangements in the Gaza Strip are proving themselves and the electronic fence almost completely prevents infiltrations from the Gaza Strip into the Jewish settlements in the area. Our correspondent Dani Zaqen reports that Minister Peres said this during a tour along the electronic fence.

Liba'i: Settlement Evacuation 'Not Even Being Considered'

TA2102115295 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Justice Minister David Liba'i has said that Alfey Menashe, Qarney Shomron, and the Barqan area in Samaria will remain under IDF [Israel Defense Forces] control even after redeployment. He said building requirements of these settlements would be considered by the ministerial committee.

He stressed that at this stage, evacuation of settlements is not even being considered.

Our correspondent Miryam Amsalem reports that Minister Liba'i made the remarks during a tour of Samaria.

MK Ramon Comments on Meeting With Secretary of State

TA2102193695 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 21 Feb 95

[Ya'aqov Ahime'ir video report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Knesset Member [MK] Hayim Ramon met with the U.S. secretary of state in Washington this evening. The meeting lasted 30 minutes and upon its conclusion, MK Ramon told our correspondent in the United States that he undertook to his electorate to serve as Histadrut secretary general until he completes the reforms to which he is committed and not necessarily until the official end of his term in 1998. At the same time, he said that his return to the government is not on the agenda at the moment. Ya'aqov Ahime'ir reports from Washington:

[Begin recording] [Ahime'ir] MK Hayim Ramon arrived at the State Department, where Mr. Christopher did not allow television coverage. Christopher said he is prepared to return to the Middle East after an absence of a few months. During the talk, he wanted to hear about the Rabin government's standing in the public.

[Ramon] He expressed sincere concern about the future of the peace process should there be no progress on the Syrian track.

[Ahime'ir] Was he concerned about the Rabin government's status?

[Ramon] He inquired about domestic affairs. For example, he asked if the government will be able to get the public to accept a peace agreement with Syria, if such an agreement is reached. My opinion is that if a peace agreement is reached and a referendum is held, the government will win the people's confidence; it may not win by a large majority, but it will win nonetheless. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Topics of Discussion Detailed

TA2202135695 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 22 Feb 95 p 2

[Report by Drora Perl in Washington]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At his meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher yesterday, Histadrut Labor Federation Chairman Hayim Ramon stressed the vital importance he attributes to U.S. involvement in the peace negotiations between Syria and Israel.

"There will be no progress without serious American involvement," Ramon told Israeli correspondents after meeting Christopher in Washington. Ramon said that Christopher had emphasized the importance he attached to making progress in the talks with Syria in order to achieve comprehensive peace and security in the Middle East. In a lighter vein, Christopher noted that he had not visited Israel in months and that he "missed it."

Christopher did not say whether he is planning a visit to the region soon. "I told him in all humility," Ramon said, "that if one seeks to promote peace with Syria, one has to spend time in the region." [passage omitted]

Christopher showed great interest in political developments in Israel and asked many questions. Christopher wanted to know whether the Israeli public would support a peace agreement with Syria, if and when such an agreement is signed. Ramon replied that past experience shows that whenever the Israeli Government has concluded serious peace agreements and presented them for public approval, they have been endorsed by the people. Ramon expressed the assessment that this would also be the case with regard to a peace agreement with Syria, on the assumption that the agreement incorporates all the components of peace and security, with "withdrawal being our part of the deal."

While speaking to the correspondents, Ramon was careful not to spell out the kind of U.S. involvement he would like to see. He recalled that such involvement had taken various forms in the past, such as the role played by Kissinger in his time, the Camp David accords and the Madrid conference.

In his meeting with Christopher and at his speech before the Washington institute for Middle East policy, Ramon expanded in detail on the problem of public support on both the Palestinian and Israeli sides. He noted that the process requires an integration of fundamental interests which were occasionally at odds with each other. For example, increasing the Israeli public's sense of security, which has been crucial for widening its support for the peace process, has come at the expense of the Palestinians' economic situation, which has subsequently caused Palestinian support for the process to drop.

Ramon said that on the personal level, the identity of the perpetrators of terrorist attacks makes no difference; however, on the national level this distinction has had great significance seeing as the mainstream of Palestinian politics—comprising the PLO—has forsworn violence and terrorism. Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad terrorism must be fought. This is the only alternative. Stopping the peace process in order to end terrorism is not a viable option, because terrorism will continue and even grow worse if the process grinds to a halt. Stopping the process would only cause currently moderate elements to join the terrorists.

Ramon said that in his view, the timetable of the Oslo agreements "is not carved in stone." Ramon said that the need may arise to prolong the agreement's implementation. So far, he noted, nothing had followed the original timetable set in Oslo, and this could continue to be the case with regard to the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment and elections in the territories.

"Whenever we began discussing a substantive issue, things were put off," Ramon asserted. As for the negotiations over the permanent arrangement, Ramon said that the time to discuss these issues has not yet arrived. Therefore, the possibility of the permanent arrangement's being deferred to a later date had not been raised.

Commenting on the government's settlement policy, Ramon said that had he been a minister today, he would have examined whether or not the decision to expand settlements contravenes the Oslo Agreement.

Ramon opined that PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat enjoys far wider public support than commonly believed. Were elections held in the territories today, Ramon said, 'Arafat would win "a larger majority than Rabin has in the Knesset." [passage omitted]

Security Forces Detain Hamas Political Leader

TA2102200595 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 21 Feb 95

[Yoram Kohen video report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Early this morning, the security forces detained Shaykh Jamil Hamami, who is considered the political leader of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in the West Bank. Shaykh Hamami was detained following the recent discovery of inflammatory material in searches the security forces conducted in several West Bank institutions identified with Hamas. Following is a report by Yoram Kohen, our correspondent in the territories:

[Begin Kohen recording] Shaykh Jamil Hamami's house in the village of Bi'r Nabala is located not far from the house where Nahshon Wachsman was murdered some time ago. The security forces often came to his house, and he was detained early this morning. [passage omitted]

Shaykh Hamami, 42, a father of six, is considered the Hamas political leader in the West Bank. He is the man who, under orders from Shaykh Yasin, brought the movement's doctrine from Gaza to Judaea and Samaria, and he currently serves as the head of the Islamic Association for Culture and Sciences, which operates several Hamas educational institutes in the West Bank. The security forces sought to detain Hamami for a long time, but it was only following the seizure of a very large quantity of inflammatory material in a raid on the Abu-Dis Islamic college that they found documents and cassettes that incriminated him. [passage omitted]

Hamami's detention is another stage in the security forces' struggle against Hamas within the framework of the greater license for action granted by the government recently. [end recording]

Minister Sarid Says Meretz-Labor Tension Resolved

TA2102164195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin conferred with Minister Yosi Sarid this afternoon and explained to him his decision on the appointments to the Interior and the Religious Affairs Ministries. Our party affairs correspondent Shmu'el Tal reports that after the meeting, Minister Sarid said he understands the prime minister's reasons. He emphasized that, as far as he is concerned, the tension between Meretz and Labor with regard to this issue is over and that he will now try to convince his party colleagues to adopt a similar position.

The prime minister said that he initiated the meeting because he has a high regard for Yosi Sarid as a minister and a human being and that he appreciates the advice Sarid gives on various issues in private talks and in the cabinet. Rabin said he explained to Sarid how the developments should be viewed, the national and historical significance of the goals, and the importance that he, Rabin, attaches to the role Sarid plays in the ongoing activity of the government and of the political team engaged in the peace talks.

Rabin, Peres Reportedly Agree To Make Beilin Minister

TA2202084695 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Rabin and Foreign Minister Peres have reached an agreement that Deputy Foreign Minister Beilin is to be appointed to a ministerial post on 15 June. The possibility exists that former Army Chief of Staff Ehud Baraq will also receive a ministerial post around the same time.

Boycott by Opposition Deprives Parliament of Quorum

JN2202081095 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 22 Feb 95 p 1

[Report by Ayman al-Safadi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Opposition deputies Tuesday [21 February] aborted the last meeting of the Lower House of Parliament in its second ordinary session in protest against a draft legislation that would repeal three laws that ban all norms of dealing with Israel.

The opposition lawmakers kept the House from meeting by boycotting the session and depriving it of quorum. Only 50 deputies showed up inside the Parliament hall, four deputies short of the 54 needed.

Lawmakers said the Islamic Action Front and leftist and pan- Arabist deputies kept their plans secret until the last minute; other deputies missed the session for other reasons.

Had other lawmakers in favour of peace with Israel known that the opposition deputies were planning the boycott, said one deputy, those among them who were absent would have showed up for the meeting and the opposition effort would have failed.

The opposition deputies, who number 23, are the minority in the House and could not on their own deny the 80-member House meeting the quorum requirement.

IAF parliamentary bloc spokesman Hamzah Mansur told the Jordan Times that the opposition's boycott of the meeting Tuesday was part of its "anti-normalisation campaign."

On the agenda of the aborted meeting was the draft law on "economic boycott and the ban on dealing with the enemy." The draft law would empower the Council of Ministers to decide who the "enemy" is and issue regulations banning dealings with it.

The draft law, which the House would have referred to its Judiciary Committee had it met yesterday, would also repeal a 1973 law that bans the sale of real estate to Israelis, a 1958 law that forces total economic boycott of Israel and a 1953 law that prohibits trade with Israel.

In a letter to the House explaining the reasons that necessitated the drafting of the new law, the prime minister said that the draft law comes in implementation of the law on endorsing the Oct. 26 peace treaty with Israel "since the objective of legislation that ban dealing with Israel in particular is" obsolete.

The prime minister said that since Jordanian laws do not regulate dealings with the "enemy," except for legislation related to Israel, the new draft law will fill this vacuum and give the Council of Ministers the power to define who is "enemy."

The House, which is expected to convene in an extraordinary session in May or June, had approved the Jordan-Israel peace treaty with a 55-23 majority.

Minister of Justice Hisham al-Tal had told the Jordan Times that the government was obliged under the treaty to repeal all laws that contradict with the state of peace with Israel.

Despite the opposition's success in aborting yesterday's session, observers said the House would eventually endorse the draft law as the majority of its members support the peace process.

"What the opposition deputies did (yesterday) was a symbolic gesture to show their opposition to peace with Israel," said one lawmaker.

Aviation Accord With Israel Termed 'Tentative'

JN2102204895 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 21 Feb 95

[From the "News at Ten" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jordan and Israel reached a tentative agreement allowing Western-bound Royal Jordanian flights to fly over Israel. The accord, achieved between Jordanian and Israeli delegations in Elat, cements yet another aspect of the October 26th peace treaty between the two countries.

Royal Jordanian Director General Nadir al-Dhahabi said: The two-month trial period allows RJ flights to cross over Israel at an altitude of 17,000 feet. If successful, the tentative agreement would pave the way for a formal overflight pact between the two countries.

Today's talks also covered other issues, including terms of reference for water storage on the Jordan and al-Yarmuk Rivers and subcommittee meetings between the two sides.

King Husayn Meets Israeli Labor Knesset Member

TA2002092895 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 20 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordan's King Husayn says that the democratic process of elections in the territories should begin now. The king said this to Labor Knesset Member Ya'el Dayan during a dinner at the king's palace.

Ya'el Dayan, who returned from a private visit to Jordan this morning, says the king claimed that his remarks to the effect that he is responsible for East Jerusalem were taken out of context and misunderstood. He explained that he used the past and not the future tense.

Minister Denies Israelis Own Jordanian Land

JN2102110995 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 21 Feb 95 pp 1, 7

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—The government on Monday [20 February] categorically rejected allegations that Israelis owned land in Jordan. The denial by Justice Minister Hisham al-Tall came as a coalition of 11 opposition groups called on parliament to reject a government-proposed repeal of three laws that call for the boycott of all dealings with Israel and prohibit the sale of land to Israelis.

"There is nowhere in Jordanian records any land owned by Israel or Israelis" in Jordan, Mr. al-Tall told the Jordan Times, noting that approval by the Council of Ministers was essential for any sale of Jordanian land to any non-Jordanian to become legally binding.

Mr. al-Tall was commenting on press reports that said that Israelis owned "large plots of Jordanian land" in the south and north and the ownership was recorded in Jordanian registers.

The Kingdom's laws permit foreigners to buy land within municipal boundaries with cabinet approval and forbid the sale of farmlands to non-Jordanians.

Mr. al-Tall's comments also came amid unsourced reports in the weeklies of some political parties—which oppose the Oct. 26 Jordan- Israel peace treaty—that Israelis were flocking to places like Ma'dabah and other ares to buy Jordanian land. None of the reports, however, cited specific details of any of the purported transactions.

The call meanwhile on Parliament to reject the repeal of laws was the latest move by the Jordanian opponents of the Middle East peace process who have vowed to fight "normalisation" of Jordanian-Israeli relations under the peace treaty.

His Majesty King Husayn reiterated this week that Jordan was fully committed to abiding by the provisions of the treaty and was determined to implement its provisions, which include normal relations with Israel.

Mr. al-Tall noted that Jordan was "obliged under the treaty to repeal the laws that contradict the state of peace with Israel."

Mr. al-Tall said the government was proposing that the three laws—a 1973 law that prohibits the sale of real estate to Israelis, a 1985 law that calls for the total economic boycott of Israel and a 1953 law that forbids trade with Israel—be repealed. These three laws specify Israel by name.

In addition, the government is proposing a new draft law that will empower the Council of Ministers to define any party/country as an enemy of the state, Mr. al-Tall told the Jordan Times.

This law would supercede any Jordanian legislation that bans dealing with Israel at any level, economic, political or cultural, and cites Israel by name or otherwise as an enemy of the state.

Mr. al-Tall noted that the 1973 law against the sale of land to Israelis was aimed at discouraging Palestinians in the West Bank from selling land to Israelis. Since Jordan severed its legal and administrative links with the West Bank in 1988, the law has been redundant and no longer has any meaning, the minister pointed out.

The two other laws also cite Israel by name and, as such, need to be abrogated in the spirit of peace between the two countries.

Officials and observers note that the repeal of the laws is also a prerequisite for launching joint projects and reaping the economic benefits of peace.

It was not known when Parliament, which starts its annual summer recess on Tuesday and which could be called for an extraordinary session in May/June, would take up the proposed motion.

However, it is widely expected that the motion would be approved by the 80-seat Lower House of Parliament where proponents of the peace treaty hold a majority. The treaty itself was approved with a 55-23 vote in the House in November.

The opposition coalition, made up mostly of Islamists and leftist groups as well as pan-Arab parties, made its call on Parliament to reject the government motion in a message addressed to the speaker and members of the House, where the opposition roughly equals the same number of votes cast against the treaty.

"The abrogation of the three laws will open the door wide for Zionist invasion, colonisation and economic domination," the statement contented. The cancellation of the laws "will also allow (Israel) to control and dominate all our abilities and resources and our security because (Israel) possesses the financial, economic and technological advances that are also supported by the U.S."

"It will also allow Israel to build colonies all over Jordan through buying real estate, land and factories, companies, hotels etc." added the statement.

It said the high density of population in Israel and the continuing migration of Jews to that country would result in Jewish migration to Jordan in the absence of the law that prohibits the sale of land and dealings with Israel.

The statement referred to what it said were the words of Israeli Likud leader Benyamin Netanyahu to the Knesset (Israeli parliament) in the presence of U.S. President Bill Clinton in October. It quoted Mr. Netanyahu as saying that "we will go through Jordan across the bridges of peace but our eyes on Moab and Jalad" (the Ma'dabah region).

Another point cited by the opposition in its push against the proposed repeal of the laws is that "it will contradict the Arab League's decision which obligate (the League's) members to boycott Israel and the companies that deal with Israel.

"It will also mean inviting our people to deal with Israel and allowing the sale of real estate to Israel at a time when (the Jewish state) is occupying Palestinian, Syrian and South Lebanese territory, is continuing the Judaisation of Jerusalem, building settlements, detaining thousands of Palestinians and Arabs in its jail and ignoring the legitimate rights of the Palestinians," the statement said.

"Can we in Jordan turn the enemy into a friend and deal with it as we deal with a Jordanian or Arab citizen, and open the door for it to invade us from the inside and also own our land, our trade, information, security and industry?" the statement asked.

"We appeal to you, our brothers in Parliament, to reject the draft motion completely so that your council will not be held responsible for opening the door for Zionists to buy our land and colonise us."

"In the interest of our public and Jordan's future—which is your responsibility as representatives of legislative power—do not be the builders of Zionist economic invasion or colonisation of Jordan," the statement went on to say.

"You know very well the danger of the Zionist movement and the teachings of the Talmud and Torah that form the Zionist ideology which they have implemented in Palestine. Do not allow them to implement a second Balfour declaration in Jordan."

The statement was signed by the Jordan Arab Ba'th Socialist Party; the Islamic Action Front; the National Action Front; the Jordan Democratic Socialist Party; the People's Democratic Party, the Jordan Communist Party, the Jordan Democratic Party, the Jordan People's Unity Party, the Party for Progress and Democracy in Jordan, the Arab Ba'thist Progressive Party, the Jordanian and Arab Constitutional Front Party.

Muhammad al-Dhuwayb, an independent member of Parliament and former minister, rejected the call and said there should not be any question over Jordan fulfilling its obligations under the treaty.

"The repeal of the laws is a part of the peace treaty, and I don't see why there should be any question over Jordan meeting its commitments under the treaty," Mr. al-Dhuwayb told the Jordan Times.

Maritime Cooperation Accord Signed With Sudan

JN1902191695 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1600 GMT 19 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, 19 Feb (PETRA)—Jordan and Sudan today signed their first agreement on cooperation in the fields of maritime transportation, commerce, and ports. The agreement seeks to promote, facilitate, and regulate maritime transportation and make use of the national ports and fleets of the two countries to achieve joint development and serve bilateral interests.

The agreement was signed for Jordan by Transport Minister Engineer Samir Qa'war and for Sudan by 'Ali 'Abd-al-Rahman, the Sudanese ambassador in Amman. [passage omitted]

Industrial Delegation, Aid Convoy Leave for Iraq

JN1802152895 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1405 GMT 18 Feb 95

[From the "Economic Bulletin" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] An industrial delegation, led by Khaldun Abu-Hassan, head of the Amman Chamber of Industry, left Amman for Baghdad today on a visit that will last for several days. During its visit, the delegation aims to complete talks it held recently with Iraqi public and private sector officials in order to reinforce economic relations between the two sides.

The delegation is accompanied by a 16-truck convoy of medical aid and foodstuffs, part of humanitarian efforts by the Jordanian public and private sectors to ease the suffering of the Iraqi people as a result of the embargo imposed on them.

Australian Trade Minister Visits To Promote Commerce

JN1702173995 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1700 GMT 17 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Australian Trade Minister Bob McMullan has started a visit to Jordan to promote commercial links between the two countries. He is accompanied by about 20 businessmen representing major Australian firms that deal with meat marketing, livestock, dairy products, and other foodstuffs and agricultural products.

During his three-day stay, Mr. McMullan will inaugurate a regional office for the Australian meat and livestock corporation. He will also lead his country's side to a Jordanian-Australian economic meeting aimed at boosting trade exchanges and increasing Australian imports of Jordanian phosphate, potash, and fertilizers.

Mr. McMullan said he was satisfied with the level of cooperation between the two countries and expressed Australia's keenness to boost the volume of trade with Jordan. Mr. McMullan was received by his Jordanian counterpart, 'Ali Abu-al-Raghib.

Meets With Industry and Trade Minister

JN1802131495 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1200 GMT 18 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Amman, 'Ali Abu-al-Raghib, Minister of industry and trade, has met with visiting Australian Trade Minister Bob McMullan. Discussions focused on ways to boost bilateral economic and commercial relations. The two tackled the possibility of importing Australian livestock and making Jordan a regional seller to reexport them to neighboring countries. The talks also covered ways of increasing Jordaian exports of crude materials and light industries to Australia.

Meets With King Husayn

JN1802173395 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1700 GMT 18 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] His majesty the king has received Australian Minister Commerce Senator Bob McMullan.

His majesty explained Jordan's choice for achieving a comprehensive and just peace in the region to enable the people and the future generation to lead a free and secure life.

The visiting minister conveyed his government's appreciation to his majesty's sincere efforts to achieve peace and rid the region of tension and struggle.

He asserted Australia's support for Jordan, and said bolstering bilateral ties in a variety of fields would help achieve development and progress for the people in the region.

Meets With Foreign Minister al-Kabariti

JN1902152495 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 19 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti met in his office today with Australian Trade Minister Senator Bob McMullan. They reviewed the distinguished relations between the two friendly countries, ways to strengthen them in various areas, and several issues of mutual interest, particularly developments in the region's peace process.

Al-Kabariti reviewed Jordan's role and continued efforts to achieve peace, stability, and security in the region, as well as its eagerness to see a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace whose positive repercussions the region's nations and their future generations can protect and benefit from.

Minutes of Cooperation Meeting Signed

JN1902155095 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 19 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The minutes of the meetings of the Jordanian-Australian joint committee were signed at the Industry and Trade Ministry today. The minutes contain several economic issues of interest to both countries. The minutes were signed for Jordan by Industry and Trade Minister Engineer 'Ali Abu-al-Raghib and for Australia by Australian Trade Minister Senator Bob McMullan. [passage omitted]

Al-Hariri Rules Out Change in Stand on Negotiations

NC2002120895 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 20 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri ruled out today any change in Lebanon's political stand on the negotiations. He said: It is because of this that Israel has resorted to acts of military escalation which are continuing to this day in the south.

Al-Hariri, al-Qadhdhafi Discuss South on Phone

NC2102073195 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0415 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Caution prevails in south Lebanon and western al-Biqa' following military operations yesterday and overnight during which Israeli aircraft bombed Hizballah positions. There were no reports on casualties.

The Resistance announced that it carried out a series of attacks on Israeli and Lahd army positions.

In a telephone call, Colonel al-Qadhdhafi and President Ilyas al-Hirawi focused on developments in the south. Al-Qadhdhafi stressed his country's commitment to the Arab defense pact and its willingness to meet any request from Lebanon to defend itself against Israel's terrorist acts.

Buwayz Says Negotiations With Israel 'Deadlocked'

NC2102175295 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The situation in the south was on today's agenda of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, which met under the chairmanship of former prime minister Amin al-Hafiz. The discussions focussed on a number of issues, notably the House of Representatives campaign on the anniversary of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which resulted in the issuance of UN Security Council Resolution No. 425 on 14 March 1978.

The committee recommended that the government file a complaint with the Security Council against Israel for its continuing attacks and the naval blockade of Tyre port. [passage omitted]

Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz, who attended the meeting, said he will propose that the Council of Ministers establish a ministerial emergency committee to follow the extraordinary situation in south Lebanon. Buwayz said: We were accustomed to asking for U.S. intervention whenever there is [Israeli] aggression. Now, however, we have to depend on ourselves, because I am afraid the Americans will not intervene.

Minister Buwayz told the committee that the negotiations on the Lebanese-Israeli track and on the Syrian-Israeli track are deadlocked. He said this means the negotiations will be delayed for two years; that is, until after the U.S. presidential elections and the Israeli parliamentary elections. This deadlock takes us into the unknown, he said.

Buwayz added: Two decisive months remain for the negotiations, and the chances are equal for success or failure.

Clarifies Statements, Criticizes Reports

NC2202145095 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz said after the Council of Ministers' meeting that some statements were released by the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee and published in the press in a very indiscriminate manner. He said: I clarified that we have a legitimate fear of deadlock, which could lead to some Israeli operations. This does not mean that we are confirming that any operation will take place. Nor does it mean that disasters will take place. The statements released by the Foreign Affairs Committee are not accurate. I did not say such things. These statements were published as if I had issued them. I wish the newspapers had clarified that they were citing the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, who was in turn citing the foreign minister. What was published were cited remarks, in part. Many points were cited selectively. I did not say: We are not trying to talk to the United States about the south. I said: The United States is preoccupied with some internal affairs and its interest has waned. There is a difference between the published reports and what I said. I did not say the peace process has entered a stage of uncertainty, has collapsed, or anything of this sort. I said the peace process is at a sensitive turning point and there is not much time left. If it does not achieve much during the coming three months, it could enter a state of limbo. I did not say the things that were published about the Morocco meeting.

Minister Buwayz added: As for the Security Council issue, I said: We cannot make an automatic decision to resort to the Security Council every time we feel like it and in advance of events, without looking into and analyzing the various circumstances of the Security Council separately. Nor did I say the opposite. What I said was: Each case must be viewed independently and we must evaluate the case itself as well as the Security Council's state. We must decide whether presenting an issue to the Security Council is realistic or not. We must first contact our ambassador, who will in turn discuss the issue with the representatives at the United Nations. Then we can learn about the general situation. If we present an issue to the Security Council, we must consider whether or not we will get any reaction. And we cannot automatically rule out referring an issue to the Security Council. Whether we resort to the Security Council or not is based on the importance and magnitude of the issue at stake, as well as the Security Council's circumstances. We cannot claim that we will resort to the Security Council every time and after every incident irrespective of what that incident is.

Birri: Israel Placing Conditions on Lifting Tyre Siege

NC2202075495 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Council of Ministers will meet today at the Prime Ministry under Prime Minister al-Hariri to discuss developments. It will also pause to discuss the recent attacks on the south and the Israeli military threats accompanying them, as well as the conditions Israel has placed on lifting its siege of Tyre Port. These conditions consist of canceling the Lebanese Army's measures taken at the crossing points between the liberated and occupied areas.

Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri revealed this information yesterday to editor's doyen Milhim Karam and union members. He said he received a telephone call from the Army command informing him that the Israelis had warned that they would continue to besiege the Tyre Port until the Lebanese Army stops search and inspection measures at its roadblocks on roads in the south and the crossings into the occupied strip.

Speaker Birri believes that through this message, Israel is showing that it wants to send in more booby-trapped cars. Speaker Birri added that the objective behind the Israeli aggression is known: Every time things cool down in the negotiations, they heat up here; every time the negotiations heat up, things cool down here. He stressed the need for resistance inside the occupied territories and highlighted that the day for solidarity with the south on 14 March will be changed into a Lebanese, Arab, and international day.

Speaker Birri also discussed political and economic developments.

Editor Views 'Impasse' at Washington Meeting

NC1802140395 Beirut AL-ANWAR in Arabic 14 Feb 95 p 1

[Editorial by chief editor Rafiq Khuri: "Steadfastness Outside the Impasse"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The main item on Lebanon's agenda, from now until the presidential elections, will be more of the same. Is this going to be the case with the regional agenda from now until the Israeli parliamentary elections, the American presidential elections, and the Palestinian elections if they are held?

The Lebanese officials returned from the meetings of the Higher Lebanese-Syrian Council in Damascus stressing the need to "fasten belts" as the peace process enters a "delicate stage"—to repeat the mild diplomatic term used by President Clinton. The parties to separate deals, who met in Washington, found themselves before a U.S. Administration on a state of alert, going to the battle led by its president and his top aides, and announcing something like a "state of emergency" in the peace process, at least to prevent anyone from using the life buoy to jump from the emergency exit on a dangerous trip.

There is a big difference between the situations of those who met here and those who met there, although in each meeting there was a place for the calculations of the absentees. Beirut and Damascus need nothing more than to stand fast in their positions pending a move forward; they do not face the danger of moving back. Those who met in Washington, on the other hand, are compelled to move forward, otherwise what they have done so far may collapse, and it will became impossible for them to maintain the minimum level of what they have agreed on, namely, not to backtrack.

The main problem exists inside the "peace alliance," irrespective of the problems and challenges that face the settlement process from outside. Nowhere could the impasse of the allied parties be seen more clearly than in the fact that the U.S. Administration found itself compelled to use all its assets to announce that the Palestinians and the Israelis have agreed to work to implement what they previously agreed on.

What happened in Washington was three big "no's" and one small "yes." "No" to backtracking, "no" to terrorism, and "no" to discussion of difficult issues such as settlements, Jerusalem, and Israel's possession of nuclear weapons. There was a "yes" to economic cooperation. What the U.S. Administration tried to remind everyone of is the link between the three dimensions of the settlement: politics, security, and economy.

What is actually happening, however, is the raising of the "security-first" slogan; that is, using the heavy Israeli stick against 'Arafat in many ways. These include "strangling" 'Arafat under the pretext of "separation" and demanding that he use his own stick against the resistance so that he can obtain a small carrot in the form of some financial aid and redeployment of the Israeli forces in the West Bank to hold elections Israel insists on banning its and 'Arafat's adversaries from contesting. What adds to this impasse is not only the attempt to raise this security slogan on all fronts—by calling on everyone to enter the war against "terrorism" to ensure Israel's security—but also U.S. patronage of this Israeli concept; that is, putting the power of American diplomacy in Rabin's hands, in addition to the military power he is holding in his other hand.

Thus, the political dimension of the settlement; namely, the principle of a land-for-peace exchange, is being alienated, not only from the Syrian and Lebanese tracks but also from the Palestinian track. The economic dimension becomes merely a "consolation prize" for the one who undermines resistance because the "grand prize" is for Israel, and consequently the United States. In the absence of the political and economic dimensions, the security dimension becomes a recipe for an Arab civil war and a gate for the collapse of the settlement.

This is not how the no-return slogan—nor, of course, the movement-forward slogan—can be realized. So, where is the way out of the impasse to the parties bound by agreements? And where is the way out of the larger impasse throughout the Middle East?

The most important thing Lebanon and Syria are doing is showing their steadfastness and confrontation from outside the impasse.

Hizballah Figure 'Knows Nothing' of Plan To Discuss Arad

NC2202081895 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah Secretary General Shaykh Na'im Qasim [title as heard] denied any knowledge of any intention to negotiate with the Israelis through Germany to exchange Israeli pilot Ron Arad for Shaykhs 'Abd- al-Karim 'Ubayd, Ahmad Yasin, and Mustafa al-Dirani.

He said he knows nothing about Arad.

Qasim revealed that some people in the occupied area, who have relatives in the Lahd Army who are prisoners of Hizballah, have repeatedly been given access to visit their relatives. Nobody has prevented Lahd's men from visiting their kinfolk held prisoner by Hizballah, because this is a humanitarian issue.

Lahd Accuses Government of Involvement With Hizballah

NC2202111795 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1030 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Staff Major General Antoine Lahd, commander of the South Lebanese Army [SLA], has warned against the dangers of what he called the Lebanese Government's involvement in the terrorist operations carried out by Hizballah, operations that target Lebanese citizens in the border region before anyone else. He said the Lebanese Army is taking part in shelling the border region based upon instructions from Damascus and Iran via Damascus. General Lahd, answering a question on the recent clashes in the south, said the SLA has never been stronger than it is today. It is still deployed in Tallusah and in a more appropriate position from the military point of view. He said: What angers the SLA as a Lebanese military force truly manifesting Lebanon's social composition is not the terrorist operations, which it deals with firmly, as proven in the past few days, but the state's military and media involvement in these operations. These operations are carried out by no more than 2 percent of the Shiites—one of the basic elements of Lebanon's social makeup.

He said: We have drawn the state's attention to the arrests and detentions it is carrying out against the sons of the border region. These ruin Lebanon's reputation and violate its higher interests in construction, stability, and prosperity.

We have drawn the state's attention to these dangerous acts, which will surely expose the country to serious problems if they continue. Answering a question on visits by the families of detainees in al-Khiyam Prison, General Lahd revealed that around 60 families have visited the prison. The measures that have been taken or that will be taken, including the decision to pardon some detainees on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr, stem from unilateral humanitarian considerations and nothing is expected in return from any side.

Al-Shar' Briefs Cabinet on Developments, Cairo Meeting

JN2102140895 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The cabinet, led by Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi, met at 1100 today to discuss the work of the Services, Economic, and Cultural Committees.

The cabinet also discussed developments in the Arab and world arenas. Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' presented a review of the latest developments, particularly those concerning the peace process. The foreign minister also reviewed the outcome of the Damascus Declaration foreign ministers' meeting in Cairo and the visit by a European troika delegation to Damascus.

The cabinet also reviewed a bill concerning the implementation of the agreement on advanced warning of nuclear accidents and providing help in the case of a nuclear accident or a radiation emergency.

The cabinet discussed agenda items, making decisions as appropriate.

Press: Israel's Stand 'Challenge' for U.S.

JN1802100495 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 18 Feb 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an editorial entitled "Israel's Practices Run Counter to Peace," TISHRIN warns against the threats facing the Middle East peace process as a result of Israel's practices and intransigence. TISHRIN urges the world community to exercise sufficient pressure on Israel to force it to accept the objective and basic requirements of peace, particularly withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and recognizing the Palestinian rights.

TISHRIN says: Neither the Palestinians, nor the Syrians and Lebanese, are advocates of wars and destruction, but they seek peace. In return for comprehensive peace, they want no more than Israel's withdrawal from their territory. When Israel makes such a withdrawal, it will not be a concession, as the Israeli rulers claim. The territory is Arab and was occupied by force. The UN Security Council resolutions stipulate Israel's full withdrawal and the return of this territory to its owners.

TISHRIN says: The truth is that Israel is using security as a pretext to cover its expansionist plans. It, therefore, is following a path that will not provide it with security, not now or in the future.

TISHRIN concludes: Only the just and comprehensive peace would guarantee the just and comprehensive peace. As is well known, such a peace requires an Israeli full withdrawal from the Golan Heights, southern Lebanon, and the Palestinian territory and its submission to the UN Security Council resolutions and the principles of international law. Israel has, thus far, been exercising the law of the jungle and violating international law, since it continues to occupy the Arab territory occupied since 1967 and is deliberately destroying a rare opportunity to arrive at an established peace in the Middle East.

Under the headline "Peace is Waiting Again," AL-THAWRAH urges the U.S. Administration to boost the peace process by implementing its declared pledges toward that process.

AL-THAWRAH says that the peace process came to a halt a long time ago and no one in the U.S. Administration specified the party that obstructed peace. The paper says it is Israel which is clearly obstructing peace, and is even challenging the United States. The paper wonders what would be the case if the Syrian position toward the peace process rejected the U.S. initiative and the implementation of UN resolutions.

AL-THAWRAH believes that the U.S. credibility is now being tested and may be damaged if Israel manages to defy this credibility and if Israel continues its challenges after it had driven the U.S. Administration into several embarrassing situations concerning the peace process.

AL-THAWRAH stresses that Syria sincerely hopes that the United States would achieve something important in the peace process and is ready to cooperate as much as it can to achieve new steps on that road.

AL-THAWRAH concludes by saying: What is happening now in terms of deliberate Israeli obstruction of the peace process constitutes a challenge to the United States, its standing and international credibility, and such a situation must be rejected by the United States.

Paper: Success of Ross's Tour Depends on Israel

JN1902124195 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 19 Feb 95

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial, AL-BA'TH discusses the upcoming tour which Dennis Ross, coordinator of the Middle East peace process, is scheduled to make to the region late this month. The tour is aimed to prepare for the resumption of bilateral talks and advancing the peace process. Stressing that Syria has not closed its doors to the peace efforts, the paper says that Syria proceeds from a very clearly defined stand based on international legitimacy and UN resolutions. The paper adds: Syria, which has time and again reiterated that a just, comprehensive peace is its strategic option, cannot contradict itself. This is because Syria's policy has been characterized as having one face based on linking words with deeds. The paper says that Israel has been fruitlessly trying to promote the policy separate and partial settlements. Therefore, it should be fully aware that such policy is useless with Syria.

AL-BA'TH stresses that the success of Ross's regional tour depends totally on what he will hear from Israel, which faces one of two alternatives, either to continue reiterating its familiar statements and placing continuous obstacles before the peace efforts, or to declare explicit commitment to the principles on which the peace process is based. Those principles provide for full and comprehensive withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories. Such a commitment will reopen the way before the resumption of the stalemated peace talks.

'Severe' Oslo Accord Crisis, Rabin 'Confusion' Seen

JN2102100595 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 21 Feb 95

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] TISHRIN comments on the severe, complex crisis the Oslo accord is going through. This accord is also a heavy burden for the region and for its signatories and the peace process.

The paper exposes the Oslo accord by saying that this accord has created the appropriate circumstances to divide the Palestinian people and strike at their national unity. In addition, the promises of the accord have not been fulfilled. Instead of releasing the Palestinian prisoners, their number has increased by around 30 percent. Israel has also continued to build settlements, and the security and economic conditions have continued to worsen.

The paper asserts that the broad headline of peace suggested by the Oslo accord to the Palestinians is a usurpation of rights, humiliation, and further suppression, terrorism, poverty, and misery. The agreement has also divided Palestinian ranks and national unity.

TISHRIN says the Oslo accord has become a real problem for Yitzhaq Rabin, who created this agreement. Rabin's popularity has declined, and he has failed to provide the security which he promised the Israelis as a result of implementing the agreement. Confusion now marks Rabin's policy.

Faced with these facts, everybody feels that the head of the Israeli Government has sabotaged chances for establishing a real peace and fanned the flames of tension and violence in the region.

The paper says: Would it not have been better for U.S. efforts and pressures to have been in the right direction to save the U.S. peace initiative and provide the requirements for a just and comprehensive peace that can provide security and stability for the region, instead of a false peace that consolidates injustice and aggression and pushes the region toward an unknown bloody fate?

AL-BA'TH says the Israelis talk about war double the times they talk about peace, after they have closed all the doors that lead to stability and security in the region. The paper says Israel has one attitude toward peaceful efforts; namely, making threats and preparing for war. This is the logic of the Israeli political regime. This is especially true since there are confirmations that Rabin and his government plan to sabotage the peace efforts. These plans have begun to materialize.

The paper asserts that Israel is avoiding the obligations and requirements of peace, which depend on the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle. Israel wants to maintain tension in the region so it may explode any minute in the absence of peace that conflicts with the logic of Israel and its leaders.

We do not think that the next stage of efforts—reportedly designed to search for ways to achieve peace—will be free of pressures on the Arabs alone. The Arabs will be warned to accept Israeli dictates or else bear the consequences of what Israel has prepared for them in the corridors of the chiefs of sin and aggression.

Commentary Views Israel's Refusal To Sign NPT

JN2102151995 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 21 Feb 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] is expected to be signed anew in late April in New York. Israel has refused to sign the NPT in the past under the excuse that foreign Arab and regional dangers threaten its very existence.

The Madrid conference, which was held in late 1991, created an atmosphere to start removing tension in the region and take practical steps to build a new reality on the ground, based on international legitimacy and the removal of the reasons for aggression by executing the land-for-peace formula and putting an end to the policy of Israeli hegemony. However, the course of later negotiations in Washington revealed that the Israeli rulers want a distorted and partial peace that guarantees that they can keep the occupied territories and impose their hegemony on the Arab parties one after the other—as was the case in the Gaza-Jericho agreement and the agreement with Amman—and infiltrate into the Arab arena through various committees, which, as far as Israel is concerned, constitute the appropriate framework to start implementing the strategy of Middle East containment.

As a result of this, peace for Israel was only a political maneuver to force the Arabs to acknowledge the Israeli occupation and open the region in the face of the Israelis, while offering nothing in return for the Arabs except further chains and hegemony.

Syria has been aware of the dimensions of the Israeli scheme since the start of negotiations. Syria stressed the need for continued coordination among the Arab parties and presented a clear document specifying the bases for achieving a just and comprehensive peace on all tracks of negotiations. Syria also warned against joining the multinationals before achieving genuine progress in the direction of peace.

Gentlemen: Syria's adherence to these principles stems from President Hafiz al-Asad's assertion that peace is a strategic option for us. Naturally, this option must be met by Israel with a similar choice and this has not been done thus far.

Under the pretext of security and its requirements, Israel is trying to torpedo the land-for-peace formula. Under the same pretext, Israel is trying to force the Arabs to relinquish their defensive requirements, while it continues to stockpile advanced and nuclear weapons in its military arsenal. Also under the security pretext, Israel is fabricating dangers that go beyond the Arab region, and which threaten it with destruction, demanding that these threats be removed.

The most recent of these pretexts is its position on the signing of the NPT. It refused to discuss this subject in the Cairo summit or in the meeting of the five foreign ministers in Washington because it considers this to be its own business and connected to its security in which—according to Israel—nobody has the right to intervene, even those who are linked to it by a peace treaty. This is because Israel considers itself above any agreement or coalition, and above any international charter.

But when Israel found itself coming under Arab and European, and even U.S., pressure to sign the NPT and open its facilities to international inspection, it started to maneuver once again to contain these pressures. The Israeli paper HA'ARETZ yesterday reported that Israel is weighing the possibility of proposing a timetable to make the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and join the NPT two years after the establishment of the comprehensive peace with all states in the region, including Iran.

Gentlemen: A thorough study of the ideas propagated by the Israeli press leads to the conclusion that Israel is trying to evade signing the NPT in April under the pretext that the comprehensive peace has not yet been established in the region. Israel is also trying to deceive the world into believing that it is not responsible for the failure to achieve peace as a result of its refusal to abandon the occupied Arab territories. Israel is also trying to link its signing of the treaty to what it calls the Iranian nuclear threat, in order to justify for itself the stockpiling of nuclear weapons and the threat to use them in the region to achieve its schemes, which are no longer concealed from anybody.

Israel is the only party that possesses nuclear weapons in the region. Hence, the nuclear threat originates from Israel and no other state. When it refuses to sign that treaty and propagates ideas that it plans to sign it only two years after the achievement of the comprehensive peace, it is in fact exercising an exposed deception that will not fool anyone. Israel wants to renege on any international treaty and it maneuvers to evade any because that would force it to implement the U.S. initiative in accordance with the land-for-peace formula; which means full withdrawal in return for full peace.

AL-THAWRAH Cited on Israeli Attacks in Lebanon

JN2202085195 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 22 Feb 95

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-THAWRAH newspaper, speaking about the Israeli attacks on Lebanon, emphasizes that Israel's objective is to isolate Lebanon. This is because Israel is seeking partial agreements in which it dictates what it wants on the party that agrees to distance itself from coordination, which, practically, is a strength to all.

AL-THAWRAH stresses that the objective of isolating Lebanon is receiving great priority because the Syrian-Lebanese coordination proved a conviction, consistency, and ability to confront the burdens of the peace battle and the Israeli attempts to gain concessions.

AL-THAWRAH says: Because Syria and Lebanon continue to adhere to the restoration of all their lands and full rights in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, the Madrid conference, and the land-for-peace principle, Israel does not stop its attempts to undermine the Syrian-Lebanese coordination, terrorize Lebanon, and employ pressure on Syria. The escalation of the Israeli aggression at this stage, and against Lebanon in particular, is a continuation of its extensive attempts in this direction.

AL-THAWRAH concludes by saying: The aggressive Israeli practices only confirm that it is evading just and comprehensive peace. This should not be accepted by the international community which viewed the peace opportunity as a ray of hope for realizing security and stability in the region. The U.S. sponsor should expedite curbing the Israeli aggressive onslaught before it aborts the peace process. Remaining silent toward the Israeli aggression does not serve peace.

Afghanistan

UN Envoy: Transfer of Power Postponed to 21 Mar

BK2202113295 Hong Kong AFP in English 1120 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Feb 22 (AFP)—The head of the UN peace mission to Afghanistan, Mahmoud Mestiri, said Wednesday [22 February] that the UN-arranged transfer of power, expected to take place this week, has been postponed to March 21.

During a news conference, Mestiri said that President Borhanoddin Rabbani, whose forces control most of Kabul, has agreed to resign on that date. Rabbani's mandate expired two months ago.

In the meantime a working group will be set up to decide the new ruling arrangements.

Under the just-scrapped UN plan, power would have gone to a council of 30 "neutral" individuals and mojahedin representatives.

Earlier Wednesday, Afghan sources close to the United Nations said Mestiri admitted to members of the prospective ruling council that the plan had failed. The working group will also decide who will be in charge of security in Kabul during the transfer of power, Mestiri said.

Four people who were to be on the council will be part of the working group.

Failure of UN-Taleban Talks Outlined

BK2102143995 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The situation in Afghanistan remains tense as the latest round of talks between the UN representatives and Taleban ended without any breakthrough. A senior UN official said more talks with the Taleban were scheduled later today. The United Nations says it is hopeful of saving its peace plan for the country after what it called encouraging and positive talks with the government side. President Rabbani was to hand over power yesterday to a coalition of military leaders but he now insists that the Taleban be included in the interim government. The Taleban say they will only take part if all the other factions are disarmed.

The UN special envoy for Afghanistan, Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, has so far failed to persuade the Taleban to accept a UN plan for power transfer in Kabul. The transition, now seven weeks overdue, is blocked by several issues. The list of candidates for the UN plan has not been finalized. The Taleban refused to participate and their demand to control security in Kabul has been rejected by the other factions.

Mr. Mestiri, who returned to Pakistan, said he will have talks with 10 to 12 Pakistan-based members of the interim governing body to which Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani is scheduled to hand over power. An uncomfortable calm prevails on the southeastern frontline, some 15 km from the city center where government troops face Taleban in the same village.

Taleban Group Prepares To Enter Kabul

LD2202114095 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Mahmoud Mestiri, the special UN envoy to Afghanistan, has announced the failure of his plan for the transfer of power in Kabul, adding that he is to start working on a new plan. A Central News Unit report from Islamabad, quoting UN sources, says that it is proposed that in the framework of Mestiri's new plan, a commission should be formed to resolve the present deadlock between President Borhanoddin Rabbani and the Taleban group. [passage omitted]

Furthermore, IRNA reports from Islamabad that the Taleban forces, who are at present stationed 15 km away from Kabul, are now preparing to enter Kabul following the failure of negotiations with Borhanoddin Rabbani's government.

General Dostam Rejects 'Partition' of Country

LD2202084095 Tehran IRNA in English 0620 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mashhad, Khorasan Prov., Feb. 22, IRNA—The National Islamic Movement Party of Afghanistan headed by General Rashid Dostam has rejected any possibility regarding partition of the country. An American news agency had previously quoted General Dostam as saying that if Taleban group launched attacks on northern Afghanistan, the movement would take measures for partition of the country.

The representative office of the movement in a letter to the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a copy of which was sent to IRNA here, reiterated that the party had always underlined the need for the maintenance of solidarity, territorial integrity and independence of Afghanistan and would stand against any attempt to separate the country.

The movement stressed that peace would be restored to Afghanistan only through participation of all political and jihad orgnizations and competent representatives of all ethnic groups in an all-embracing political structure.

Wahdat-e Eslami Leader Calls For UN Patience

LD2102195895 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The United Nations should be patient regarding the power transfer. In view of recent developments, the UN proposal requires further discussion. This point was made by esteemed Mohammad

Akbari, head of the political committee of Wahdat-e Eslami and its spokesman, in an interview with a BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY correspondent. He added: We support the UN efforts, but due to recent political-military changes some problems have arisen as regards this proposal which require further talks. [Words indistinct] Esteemed Akbari added: Mazari is the main cause of the fighting in the west of Kabul, and the only way to prevent tension is to evict Mazari from this area.

Answering a question, Mr. Akbari said: Mazari can never represent Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami. He was expelled from the Wahdat party some months ago by a majority decision of the central council. [Words indistinct]

Regarding the recent stance of the Government of Iran toward Afghanistan, esteemed Akbari said: The recent stance of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not in the interest of the Shiites and the people of the two countries. As for the disarming of the Taleban he said: No group has the right to embark on disarming before the establishment of an elected government. Standing by the Islamic State of Afghanistan, Hezb-e Wahdat Eslami is ready to defend Kabul city against any aggressor.

'Serious Clash,' Looting Reported in Mazar-e Sharif

LD2102182795 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A serious clash flared up recently in Mazar-e Sharif city between the Dostam militia and men of the Mazari band.

The Bakhtar Information Agency say that this clash which flared up at the Haji Ayub crossroad in Mazar-e Sharif city, and continued for several hours. During that time heavy weapons fire was exchanged, and eight men from the belligerent parties were killed and six others were injured.

The report adds that the security situation in Mazar-e Sharif city has been completely disrupted. Six shops have been looted during the past two nights. The cause of the recent insecurity and discord is said to be the increasing financial difficulties of the Dostam militia.

Iran Accused of 'Interference' in Affairs

LD1802171795 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 18 Feb 95

[Statement by a Foreign Ministry spokesman "regarding the summoning of the Afghanistan ambassador in Tehran by the Iranian Foreign Ministry and the concern of this country regarding the situation southwest of Kabul; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Keeping in mind the friendly relations and ties between the two countries' Muslim people, which have historic, cultural, linguistic, and Islamic brotherhood roots, the Afghan Foreign Ministry believes that these relations and ties, which have been strengthened by Iran's support for Afghanistan's mojahed and Muslim people in their righteous jihad against the aggressive forces of the Soviet Union will be further strengthened in the future in the interests of both countries' people, and peace and security in the region.

Unfortunately, the unfriendly remarks by the Iranian authorities are not only contrary to the spirit of good relations and good neighborliness between the people of the two countries but are also incorrect. Because, contrary to their claim, it was the Mazari band who had carried out a surprise attack on the Afghan Army positions.

Believing and having full confidence in the further deepening and expansion of friendly and fraternal relations between the Islamic State of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Afghan Foreign Ministry regards remarks by the authorities of the Iranian Foreign Ministry as an interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs and the Afghan Foreign Ministry expresses hope that the Iranian authorities refrain from the repetition of such statements and remarks in the future.

India

Expert Views Conditions for Limiting Nuclear Capability

BR2102144495 Paris LIBERATION in French 20 Feb 95 p 14

[Interview with Jasjit Singh, director of the New Delhi Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, by Francois Sergent and Patrick Sabatier; place and date not given: "Nuclear Option Is a Guarantee for India"—first paragraph is LIBERATION introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] India and Pakistan are the only two countries in the world which are openly at war and are neighbors and nuclear powers. India exploded a nuclear warhead on 18 May 1974 while Pakistan has claimed on a number of occasions that it possesses the atom bomb. However, neither India nor Pakistan intends signing the nonproliferation treaty [NPT] which expires in April and which the West is looking to extend. Jasjit Singh, former Indian Air Force general and an expert in nuclear issues explains why India is opposed to the NPT. Jasjit Singh is currently the director of the New Delhi Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses.

[LIBERATION] Does your country not intend controlling nuclear proliferation?

[Singh] You must not confuse nonproliferation with the NPT. Nuclear proliferation is a problem which concerns the Indians directly but the treaty does not reply to this problem. It does not establish any links between nuclear proliferation and nuclear weapons. India was one of the first countries to ask for a NPT but this treaty is discriminatory because it creates two categories of country: The five nuclear powers and the rest. Basically, this treaty legitimizes nuclear weapons by creating nuclear states.

[LIBERATION] Is India one of them?

[Singh] No, but India could become one. So could 30 or so other countries which have and can use nuclear reactors. India could build nuclear warheads in a reasonable time frame.

[LIBERATION] What about Pakistan?

[Singh] Pakistan has nuclear weapons. The Pakistanis themselves say so. The leader of the opposition, Nawaz Sharif, said it and even explained that when he was prime minister he sent his chief of staff to Washington to confirm Pakistan's nuclear status.

India's strategic interest is for there to be no nuclear weapons around us. We have conventional arms superiority over Pakistan and even over China given the inaccessibility of our common frontier. However, as soon as China and Pakistan acquired nuclear weapons India could not have opted for unilateral nuclear disarmament. For us the nuclear option is a kind of guarantee.

[LIBERATION] Do you think that China or Pakistan could relinquish their nuclear arsenals?

[Singh] No, that is not realistic unless the United States puts pressure on them to do that and itself starts to disarm. Then there is a domino effect.

[LIBERATION] Does India export its nuclear technology, for example to Iran?

[Singh] We would take every precaution if we were to export our nuclear technology or products. India has much more respect for nonproliferation than China. For example, we had excellent relations with Iraq but we never appeared on the list of Baghdad's suppliers.

[LIBERATION] Is there not at least the possibility of putting a ceiling on your nuclear capability given the volatile nature of your relations with Pakistan?

[Singh] I would not talk of a ceiling when it comes to our relations with Pakistan but rather of so-called confidence measures. In this way we both undertook not to attack the other's nuclear installations in 1992. Last year, India proposed a deal on not attacking civilian targets and densely populated areas. Pakistan failed to answer this proposal. However, a treaty of this type would eliminate to a large extent all the logic and legitimacy for using atomic weapons. As for setting a ceiling on our nuclear program, that is possible on condition that there is a global treaty on nuclear testing and a ceiling set for the whole world. We just want a minimum level of dissuasion toward China and that is what we have at present. We are credible.

Proposed Ban on Fissile Material Production Viewed

BK2102132495 Delhi THE ECONOMIC TIMES in English 14 Feb 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Say 'No!'"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The nuclear powers are sparing no efforts to project to the rest of the world that they are well on the way to achieving, one, a comprehensive test ban and, two, weapon-grade fissile materials production cut off. Both these were proposed by India and other non-aligned countries in the mid-1960s. The nuclear proliferators refused to accept them and went on to build some 70,000 nuclear weapons. The US and its proliferating accomplices are trying to propagate these two proposals as their new initiatives, in order to mollify the growing opposition to the perpetuation, via extension of the non-proliferation treaty, of the legitimacy of nuclear weapons. China has made it clear that it will continue to test till 1996 and therefore there will be no comprehensive test ban before that. There are unresolved issues about computer-based testing and design and hydronuclear testing in laboratories, besides.

The five nuclear weapon powers are proposing, from atop a mountain of weapon-grade fissile material, to issue a declaratory statement on fissile materials production cut off, without verification, and asking Pakistan and India to join it. This move is a trap. The most potent danger is not the limited quantities of such fissile materials produced in Israel, Pakistan and India but the enormous quantities of the stuff with the five nuclear weapon proliferators. There have been fissile material transfers among the nuclear weapon powers and allegations of transfers and diversions to non-nuclear weapon powers. There have been widely publicised reports of seepages of fissile materials from ex-Soviet republics. Further, the nuclear club is not willing to guarantee the supply of either fissile material for civilian uses or related technologies. India may continue to support weapon grade fissile materials production cut off in principle and be willing to help the international community to draft a foolproof nondiscriminatory convention with rigorous safeguards on all nuclear material stockpiles. At the same time, India should firmly reject any attempt to take it for a ride on the basis of some verbal declarations. In 1964 India moved the resolution on non-proliferation. The idea was hijacked, perverted and converted into a licence for proliferation. Let India be on guard against a second misadventure of that type.

Article Urges Faster Economic Reform Process

BK1802123595 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 18 Feb 95 p 11

[Article by Manas Chakravorty: "Growth Will Cut Inequalities"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Serious misgivings have been expressed of late about the effect the economic reform process has had on the poor. The state elections and recent data on the increasing incidence of poverty have combined to bring the issue into the limelight. The fact that poverty has increased during the 1990-1992 period has been widely construed as being the effect of the government's liberalisation policies. Although this has, except for the lunatic fringe, not generated any demand for scrapping liberalisation, it has led to much soul-searching on the impact of liberalisation on the poor.

This has led to a clamour for retaining subsidies, which has in turn sparked off a debate on the need and merits for such populism.

The thrust of the neo-liberal argument is that critics of liberalisation tend to take a very short-term view of the process. In the longer-term, the economic growth unleashed by the reform process will, by increasing the size of the economic pie, also ensure increased income for the poor. According to this view, the period 1990-92 was a period of poor growth for the Indian economy, and it was consequently normal for poverty to increase. With growth picking up, the picture would be much better.

It is also argued that if redistributive measures are put in place, these may derail the growth process and hence harm the poor in the long run. The choice for the poor is portrayed as being one between a larger share of a smaller income, or a smaller share of a larger and faster-growing total income.

The choice may seem self-evident to some. When the majority of the population lives from hand to mouth, talking about the long run does not make much sense, at least for these people. If measures are not taken to provide safety nets, they are likely to be dead when the long run comes around. It will be recalled that even Friedrich Hayek, guru of the neo-liberals and a staunch opponent of anything remotely resembling socialism, explicitly pointed out in his "Road to Serfdom", that the provision of basic minimum needs should continue to be the duty of the state.

But the liberal argument is worth examining. It has two components. First, it assumes that economic growth would automatically result in reduction of poverty—the so-called "trickle down theory". Secondly, it argues that growth will be slower if redistributive measures are put in place.

The assumption that economic growth will lead to a trickle-down effect is contingent upon inequalities not increasing. The findings of economists in this field are best represented by the Kuznets curve, which says that the share of income accruing to the poor will tend to fall with growth at very low levels of income, and to increase at higher income levels. But inequality depends on a host of other factors. In the USA, for instance, studies have shown that while per capita income rose by 28.3 per cent during the period 1973 to 1989, the rise in income of the poorest fifth was marginal.

What are the factors likely to have an effect on income distribution during the period of structural adjustment? The export orientation of the new policy will mean that the gap between tradable and non-tradable goods in the agricultural sector will increase. Growth in the manufacturing sector would also increase the demand for workers with basic literacy skills, and the gap between skilled and unskilled workers could increase.

But perhaps the most important impact on inequality is the initial asset distribution in the country. The additional income generated from growth accrues to those who own assets, whether physical or human. The initial distribution of assets will also affect the way markets work. Whether luxury cars or pump sets are produced will depend upon the purchasing power of those who want pump sets or luxury cars.

It would be instructive to compare the experience of the four tigers. The shift to export production resulted in lower inequality in Taiwan as the labour intensive nature of the goods produced for export led to more jobs for those with basic skills. But while that was the initial effect in the 1960s, subsequent decline in inequality seems to be explained not so much by the change in the kind of production, but by an increase in the supply of educated labour, which served to lower skill differentials in the population. The data from Korea and Singapore show similar effects.

Income distribution under a more open economy is less unequal than under an import substitution strategy. That is because, under an import substitution regime, manufactured goods are more expensive. Since the bulk of the population earns a living by agriculture and agriculture-related occupations, this increases the gap between town and country, between rich and poor. By reducing prices for manufacturers and this improving terms of trade for agriculture, an outward-looking strategy leads to lower inequality. Increasing skills, however, seems to be equally important.

To take the second proposition of the neo-liberals, will growth be affected by redistribution? There are two strands to this argument. The first argues that redistribution affects the incentives to work. That has been one of the reasons for reducing taxes at the top end. But supply siders have also tried to correspondingly reduce unemployment benefits in the developed countries. The logic, as Galbraith pointed out, seems to be that the rich don't work because they are paid to little, while the poor don't work because they are paid too much. The argument seems motivated more by self-interest than hard evidence.

The second strand of the argument is more serious. As a result of redistribution, the propensity to save, of the economy as a whole, is reduced, since the poor consume a larger proportion of their income than the rich. Since resources are diverted from investment to consumption, growth will slow down.

Fortunately, the experience of the East Asian tigers has been rather different. Although countries such as Taiwan and Korea started off as relatively egalitarian societies, their savings rates have been among the highest in the world. That seems to indicate that other measures can increase growth, and therefore counteract the tendency towards lower savings.

Privatisation, for example, is one area which will allow the government to generate the resources needed for addressing its social concerns. Dismantling controls over the economy and getting the government out of business will enable it to devote resources to the social sector. The reallocation of resources on the basis of comparative advantage will increase efficiency. Efficient targeting will enable the government to direct resources to the really needy. And the effect of higher nutritional levels on improving productivity should not be overlooked.

Contrary to popular opinion, therefore, there is no contradiction between liberalisation, growth and social justice. Accelerated structural change alone can provide the wherewithal for continuing subsidies to the poor, while unleashing forces which will take the country to a higher growth trajectory.

'Weak Spots' in Industry Viewed

BK1802103995 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 18 Feb 95 p 11

[Editorial: "Fun of the Fair"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The International Engineering Trade Fair is no longer an engineering fair alone; but it has thereby gained breadth. It has always been a spectacle; this time it is more of a market place. There is real electricity in the atmosphere. The activity is greater in the mornings; there are more business visitors, and more business is being done. There are many new firms in the fair, the face of Indian industry is changing. More people have come from abroad to look at that face, to share in the new opportunities; apart from the Italians who as partners have registered a strong presence at the fair, there are manufacturers from many other countries participating, and many more are visiting, looking around, and doing business. Clearly, with liberalisation, the pulse of Indian industry has quickened, and it can be felt at the fair. Nevertheless, there are weak spots. The pattern till the 1980s was that Indian companies watched imports; when they saw imports of a product rising, they got imports banned, approached foreign suppliers and offered to make the product under licence in India. Few of the approaches were successful, for producers abroad did not often have confidence in the Indian companies that approached them or in the market prospects in India. But because Indian companies had done some homework on the market and on foreign suppliers, a minimum information base existed on which both could build.

Now Indian companies are coming to the fore which have had hardly any foreign contacts; conversely, foreign companies are coming here which had never thought of India as a place to do business. This is excellent. The danger is that Indian companies may be proposing "collaboration" without knowing what it might involve. At the same time, foreign companies are happy to find a market in India, but baulk at the costs and risks of servicing a market and of indigenous production to get closer to the market.

One way to end this state of affairs would be to make it easier for foreign companies to become familiar with India. This requires two changes. First in exchange control. Under the current exchange control regulations, the Reserve Bank of India on its own can permit foreign companies to set up offices and to operate as long as they do not make profits. If they want to do business and remit profits, they still have to go to the government for permission. In the absence of this permission, representative offices are restricted to servicing exports of their principals into India. They cannot, for instance, sell services, or sell technology, or set up a value added business, all useful to India. hence exchange control needs to be liberalised so as to allow foreign companies to remit profits up to a certain limit without permission.

The other change is required in industrial policy regulations. In addition to automatic approval in priority industries and approval through the Foreign Investment Promotion Board [FIPB] and the Foreign Investment Committee of the Cabinet [FICC] on a case-by-case basis, it is necessary to allow foreign companies to do business in India without approval as long as their turnover is below a certain sum. They should also be allowed to buy Indian firms as long as this limit is adhered to. If they approach the limit and want to grow beyond it, they should be subject to regulation. But here too, automatic approval for 51 per cent investment in priority industries and discretionary approval through the FIPB-FICC are inadequate; some automatic, transparent rules need to be introduced which would permit growth beyond the ceiling without too much frustration and hassle.

Commentary Sees Increasing Trade With EU

BK2102124995 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1010 GMT 21 Feb 95

[Commentary by N.K. Kaul]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India's economic liberalization has opened up its trade vistas. The result is more and more industrially advanced and not so advanced countries are looking toward it with covetous eyes. Its vast middle class populace provides them ample opportunities of market. The just concluded two-day conference between India and the European Union [EU] of the world's 12 most industrially developed countries in New Delhi bears enough proof to the fact that India is slowly but steadily gaining its economic importance. Some 250 or so Indian and foreign invitees attended the conference which saw some of the most influential people in trade, industry and finance rubbing shoulders with each other.

The European Union countries and India, of course, are not new to each other. Their mutual association began early with India establishing relations with the European Economic Community when the six-member community was barely four years old. India was first among the developing countries to establish diplomatic ties in 1962 and dispatched an ambassador to Brussels. It was among the first non-associated developing countries with which an approach different from the one evolved for the associated developing countries of the Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific was followed by the community.

European Union and India have concluded several agreements of economic cooperation which have proved mutually beneficial. The first trade agreement between the two was signed in 1973, soon after the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark had joined the community. Thus a contractual basis for the India-European Union relations had got established. Over the years, the European Union countries have emerged as India's biggest trade partners. India's 25 percent exports and 34 imports run with the European Union with which a 340 million strong population constitutes the world's biggest trade bloc. Germany and the United Kingdom, two of the European Union members, are the two largest trading partners of India. The two account for almost 55 percent of the Indian exports to the European Union. The European Union's imports from India have grown by around seven and half times in nominal terms during the last two decades and the exports too have kept virtually the same pace.

Despite a rise in India and European Union's trade, one cannot forget the fact that India's share in the European Union countries total imports is as paltry as zero point eight percent. The experts at the recent conference were insisting upon the fact that the proportion of India's export to European Union could not remain at such a low level. With India's economic opening up, a lot of reforms all around have been seen as it enters its fourth year. [sentence as heard] The single instance is that of expansion in the export credit. In the current fiscal year it is estimated to have touched a figure of 50,000 million rupees, or roughly $1.7 billion. It alone will, however, not do. India for a long has remained exporter of textiles, coir, jute, leather goods, gems and jewelry, mainly accounting for 71 percent of its total exports to the European countries till as late as 1992. It has to spruce up its image as a trade partner. The latest India-European Union accord of 1994, of course, expects to see stepped up Indian exports to the European Union through agriculture exports like fresh fruits, cut flowers and meat preparations, and electronics, computer software, machine tools, iron and steel bars and sports items. Besides, it will have to see higher capacity utilization of its industrial plants through better research and development and packaging improvement for products like tea, tobacco, coffee and marine foods. India, as one of its sages Swami Vivekananda called it sleeping giant, is indeed awakening to its potential and the world certainly looks toward it with hope and aspirations.

Oil Privatization 'Should Not' Hurt ONGC

BK1802130495 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 18 Feb 95 p 10

["Excerpt of the Eighth Malaviya Memorial Speech" by G.V. Ramakrishna on 13 February; place not given: "Freedom From Free Riders"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Today, in the context of liberalisation, both Indian and foreign private sectors have been invited to participate in the development of the Indian petroleum sector. In this effort we should be careful not to undo past achievements by holding back the Indian public sector. Foreign and Indian private sectors should actually complement and expand on the activities of the public sector and should not try to displace it. Petroleum continues to occupy a crucial place in our energy sector. However the extent of our dependence on import of crude petroleum and its products has been growing over the years. Domestic production has been growing rather slowly and the accretion to new reserves has been growing even more slowly. We are today producing every year more oil than the accretion to our oil reserves. The current reserves to production ratio is only about 17 years. There is therefore every indication of our increasing dependence on imports for meeting the growing demand.

Indian crude petroleum production is expected to plateau in the next year or two and will begin to decline in the next four or five years. Our exploration efforts have not produced any significant results in the last four years although larger amounts have been spent than before. It is anomalous for the oil industry to state on the one hand that exploration is probabilistic and not deterministic and on the other hand to project future discoveries solely on the basis of additional expenditure on exploration. The last four years have shown that in spite of increasing expenditure on exploration, additional discoveries are actually diminishing quite sharply. It is therefore essentially for ONGC [Oil and Natural Gas Commission] to assess and review its exploration policy in order to optimise the deployment of its resources and to upgrade the quality of its data analysis. The present exploration policy has become expensive and counter productive and unless corrections are made now the financial viability of ONGC may be affected in the next few years.

In the liberalised environment, the question has to be raised whether ONGC should act like a state owned national oil company or operate as an international oil company on commercial lines. ONGC is a national oil company. There are in fact over 70 national oil companies in the world. A national oil company is generally understood to mean a company with upstream and/or downstream activities and is controlled by the government. More importantly, it serves the national interest. All over the world national oil companies are expanding their activities with vertical integration and are becoming more commercially oriented. Apart from exploring in other countries through its overseas subsidiary, ONGC should also think in terms of acquiring a share in proven fields in other parts of the world. If foreign oil companies are being brought into developed oil fields explored and proven by ONGC with 40 per cent new investment coming from ONGC, this should have been an opportunity for ONGC also to participate in the development and production of oil fields held by these foreign oil companies. This development would not only have been more equitable in terms of resources allocation but also enable ONGC to observe and study reservoir management by the major oil companies and provide long term revenues for further development.

Just as ONGC is in the process of getting partially privatised by the sale of government shares and offering new shares to the public, many other national oil companies are also following the same route. Examples are: British Petroleum, Elf of France, Vebco of Germany and YPF of Argentina. Such partial privatisation of ONGC should not only result in a greater commerical orientation but also greater autonomy. Its capacity to raise funds in the market, either by way of equity or loans, will depend on its ability to demonstrate effective use of resources and capacity to generate additional revenues. With production plateauing and exploration and production expenditures mounting sharply, it would be a real challenge for ONGC to demonstrate long term commercial viability; unless there is a major policy review of its role and redistribution of its expenditures between exploration and production.

Inducting private capital should not be seen as an exercise for its own sake. Even among the proven oil fields discovered by ONGC, considerable areas are being handed over for development and production to private parties. There should be a careful assessment of the costs and benefits to ONGC and to the country. Proven oil fields are the real assets of ONGC and it should therefore have the first option to develop these assets to provide additional revenue earnings. The resources required for investments for the development of those fields are not beyond the means of ONGC. If resources could be raised by ONGC at the level envisaged at the beginning of the eighth plan, there is no reason why the first claim on these resources should not be on the development at its discoveries. Indian and foreign private parties coming to develop and produce from oil fields explored and proved by ONGC are expecting returns or over 30 per cent. We should not reach a stage when ONGC's resources are deployed for high risk exploration activities and lucrative production handed over to private parties. Such a course will affect the capacity of ONGC to raise resources in the domestic and international markets.

Another disturbing feature in inducting private sector for producing in areas exploited by ONGC is the non-recovery of a reasonable part of the sunk costs on exploration. When foreign parties first explore and, if successful, produce oil, and are allowed to recover exploration costs, then there seems to be no reason why when proven fields are handed over for production, then reasonable costs of exploration are not recovered either in the form of cash or in the form of prescriptive right over the oil produced.

In the area of pricing of oil, it could be said that in the past ONGC was not discriminated against merely because there were no other parties in whose favour discrimination would be exercised. With the induction of the private parties, it should be ensured that the price of the oil and gas given to those private producers from ONGC's discoveries is also given to ONGC production from its own discoveries. Disparity in pricing should also not apply in the refinery sector where private parties will begin operating shortly.

When the Indian petroleum companies have come of age, it is now time for them to grow faster and become international players. Our refinery companies have attained a high level of efficiency but are still confining their activities only to refining and marketing. It is time they begin to think and operate like international oil companies with diversified activities. They should begin to plan the efficient utilisation of their large financial resources by looking out for opportunities to acquire shares in proven oil fields in various parts of the world. They should meet some of their refinery needs from these oil fields or by swapping the production from these oil fields for acceptable grades suitable for their refineries. Even in the area of refining operations they should not merely be the producers of fuel and other intermediate products but should take joint venture partners in the petro-chemical and other down stream units based on their refinery products. Oil and natural gas companies in the public sector should be free to take these decisions in their commercial interests.

Additional investments by public sector oil companies for marketing their own products may be inescapable but such additional investments for providing marketing infrastructure for private parties should be made on the basis of reasonable rate of return with reference to opportunity costs of the oil company resources in other activities around the world. It is unfair to compel public sector companies to share their existing marketing infrastructure with the private sector when their own requirements for the present and future should take precedence. In all these matters full freedom should be given to the management of the oil companies to take decision in their own commercial interests without any interference from government.

Self-Reliance in Cryogenic Technology in 5 Years

BK2202024695 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1630 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India will become fully self-reliant in cryogenic engine technology in the next five years. Stating this in Kota today, the chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization, Dr. Kasturi Rangan, said that mastering of this technology would help the country develop its own Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle [PSLV] that can place one-ton satellites in orbit 800 to 100 [preceding figure as heard] away from the earth. He said with the launching of the PSLV, India has already joined the select band of four nations that have achieved this feat. Dr. Kasturi Rangan said another PSLV will be launched next year to be followed by four more such launches by the end of the current decade.

Commentary Lauds Use of Remote Sensing Data

BK2002041095 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 20 Feb 95

[Commentary by M. Suresh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India recently became a world leader in remote sensing, with the data collected by its satellites sought after by many countries. In fact, voluminous data is now being sold through an American company, bringing in precious foreign exchange to the country.

While the world is looking toward India in this field, unfortunately the precious information collected by India's own eyes in the sky is not being put to maximum use. This has forced the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology to observe in its latest report that the country should step up its efforts in this direction.

Nearly seven years ago, India entered the exclusive space club when the first indigenously built Indian Remote Sensing Satellite, IRS-1A, was launched on 17 March 1988. Since then, IRS-1B, the second in the series, has also been launched and the third one, IRS- 1C, is set to be put in orbit later this year. IRS-1A and 1B have demonstrated their unquestionable importance, having become the mainstay of a national natural resource management system. Remote sensing from space has become a vital component of the application of space technology for the development of land and water resources all over the world. This is because with powerful cameras installed in the satellite, it is possible to quickly produce a large number of maps indicating availability of ground water. Satellite pictures taken in infrared and near-infrared regions provide vital clues about water. In fact, under the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission, the entire country has been mapped for ground water potential. Extensive monitoring of sedimentation and water spread in reservoirs to plan irrigation scheduling and command area development has been made with the help of remote sensing data. For the first time, we are now able to provide accurate estimates of the snow melt runoff into the rivers and lakes in north India using satellite imagery.

Space technology has provided a powerful tool for overall national development, for the remote sensing data is now used for diverse applications in agriculture, drought warning, wasteland management, water resources, ocean resources, urban land use, mineral resources, marine and inland fisheries. State governments have to realize that integrated development at the village is the only answer for environmentally sustainable development.

Two Transmitters Inaugurated in Madhya Pradesh

BK2102045895 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1630 GMT 20 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Two low-power transmitters have started functioning at Bijapur and Lahar in Madhya Pradesh. The transmitters were inaugurated by the union minister for human resource development, Mr. Madhavrao Scindia, yesterday. Mr. Scindia also inaugurated a large bridge at Nander in Gwalior District.

Pakistan Asked Not To Harass Visa Applicants

BK2002134195 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 20 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has asked Pakistan to stop harassing its visa applicants. The Indian high commission in Islamabad has said that it received complaints of questioning and harassment of applicants who want to visit to India. A press release issued today also charged the Pakistan Government with frequently interrupting the high commission's telephone communication, while responding to queries from Pak nationals. The statement said that special arrangements to cater to the demands for visas have been taken and efforts are also being made to process expeditiously thousands of visa applications.

Iran

UN Human Rights Report Viewed 'Spiteful'

NC2202090495 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 22 Feb 95

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its annual report, the UN Human Rights Commission has again repeated its earlier spiteful and contradictory claims and has criticized violations of human rights in Iran. This report has been prepared indirectly on the basis of groups hostile to the Islamic Republic of Iran by the Commission's rapporteur Reynaldo Galindo Pohl.

Despite Pohl's frequent visits to Iran and his gaining permission to talk to officials and inspect the prisons, he has again proved his ill intentions. The Islamic Republic of Iran gave the UN rapporteur permission to visit Iran on numerous occasions so that he could compile an objective and logical report on human rights in Iran.

Such facilities are rarely provided by other countries. Iran hosted Galindo Pohl three times, thus displaying its goodwill and willingness to cooperate with the Commission. Although his first report was considered to be somewhat close to the facts, his subsequent reports—in view of the invalid documents and influence and pressure from the U.S. Government—confirmed what the Islamic Republic of Iran had long known.

The Commission has become a lever of pressure and propaganda in favor of the powerful governments and uses the sacrosanct term of human rights for the benefit of one or some of them. This two-sided approach toward countries and the use of unrealistic and vindictive reports reveals how much human rights are overshadowed by the vital interests of the superpowers.

It is amazing that despite scores of reliable documents, radio reports, interviews with those who admitted to the murder of Christian pastors by the Monafeqin ['hypocrites'—pejorative term for the Mojahedin e-Khalq Organization] grouplet, again the Commission has ignored the numerous and clear documents. It is bandying about violations of minority rights in defense of those elements who are the main perpetrators of the atrocities against the three Christian pastors.

The major catastrophe of planting a bomb at the holy Imam Reza shrine and the silence of the human rights organization cannot be forgotten by the great Iranian nation, which expects international organizations to judge human rights and misanthropic catastrophes in a just manner.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has declared that it is prepared to accept any person but Galindo Pohl to assess human rights in Iran. It has constantly upheld the rights of international organizations for the proper and sincere attainment of human rights by cooperating with the Commission. This time too, when the Islamic Republic of Iran's conditions are met, it will again be prepared to accept the Commission's representative.

Commentary Urges Lifting Sanctions Against Iraq

LD2002124895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1100 GMT 20 Feb 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] With the approach of the UN Security Council meeting responsible for reviewing the possibility of lifting or extending economic and military sanctions against Iraq, many countries have embarked on diplomatic activity. Rolf Ekeus, head of the UN special commission disarming Iraq, arrived in Baghdad yesterday for talks with Iraqi officials today. After his four-day mission, Ekeus will return to New York to report on the progress of the Iraqi disarming program to the Security Council. His report will be the basis for the council's decision.

Iraq has already initiated an extensive diplomatic effort to change the American and British views on the sanctions, and has dispatched several ministers to Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, and some other Arab countries.

But Kuwait, continuing to sense the Iraqi danger, has also initiated efforts to retain the economic sanctions. Only yesterday, Shaykh Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti foreign minster, arrived in Paris in order to convince the French Government to maintain the military and oil sanctions.

Political analysts believe recent remarks by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher claiming that economic sanctions have been violated and that Baghdad has sold oil worth several hundred thousand dollars, indicate that Washington, through the dissemination of such information, continues to oppose the lifting of sanctions against Iraq, and in order to rationalize this policy it is likely that Washington will produce similar news regarding the violation of the economic embargo or Iraq's reluctance to destroy weapons of mass destruction.

But the vital elements is the fate of the Iraqi people. Iraq's attack on Kuwait was an aggression committed by the ruling regime in Baghdad, and it is not correct to punish the Iraqi people for a crime committed by their rulers. Nor is it correct to accept the continuation of the economic sanctions against the innocent Iraqi people just because American policy requires the present configuration.

The White House refuses to close the file on the oil war because the division in the Arab world caused by the war is suitable for pushing forward the deals planned to legitimize the usurper-Zionist regime in the Middle East.

UN Mission Denies TIMES Report on Iraqi Oil

LD1802091495 Tehran IRNA in English 0549 GMT 18 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] United Nations, New York, Feb. 18, IRNA—Iran's permanent mission to the United Nations here Friday [19 February] categorically denied allegations made by the NEW YORK TIMES on Iran's involvement in shipment of Iraqi oil and refined products.

In a statement the mission expressed its astonishment over the "fabricated" report of the NEW YORK TIMES on February 16 which quoted "anonymous senior oil industry executives and traders on so-called secret sale of the Iraqi oil in Iran in violation of the U.N. Security Council resolution and on the financial links between the Iranian Government and many of the middlemen who operate along Iran's border with Iraq."

The permanent mission categorically denied the allegations and considered them as "unjust attempts by certain circles, mainly in the United States, to implicate the Islamic Republic of Iran, without any supporting evidence, in the alleged smuggling of the Iraqi oil and refined products."

The NEW YORK TIMES has claimed that last year Iraq secretly exported some 200,000 barrels of oil each day averagely which brought in some dlrs. 700,000 to 800,000 for Baghdad.

"The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has time and again rejected any direct or indirect involvement in any shipment of the Iraqi oil and will not allow any violation of the Security Council resolutions within its borders until the United Nations decides to lift the sanctions," noted the statement.

Daily Says Europeans Coveting Iraq's Resources

LD1802223395 Tehran IRNA in English 2213 GMT 18 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 19, IRNA—The English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' said in an article Sunday [19 February] that lifting the ban on trade with Iraq is imminent and some of the European countries are striving now to establish trade with Saddam.

The article which was received by IRNA minutes before the paper went into print Saturday night said:

"Last Friday, a delegation of British businessmen arrived in Iraq. The trip was organized by a British group that supports closer ties between Baghdad and London.

"It had already been announced in the British press that such a trip was going to take place. But the fact that this trip has taken place in such a hurry points to the anxiety of Britain in regards to its position in the Persian Gulf, especially in regards to Iraq.

"The delegation's trip is taking place due to the fact that Britain does not want to take the back seat in the race to make a killing in the Iraqi market. Despite the ban on doing trade with Iraq, the two members of the Security Council, France and Russia, have recently begun expanding their trade relations with Iraq. Lately, Italy has joined the above mentioned race.

"The hidden efforts of the Conservative MP's in secretly organizing this trip show that Britain is worried about its position in the region. Thus, in a break with its tradition of toeing the line of the U.S., Britain has decided to join those members of the Security Council that have violated the ban on Iraq.

"What is really certain now is that lifting the ban on trade with Iraq is imminent and the European countries—Spain, Italy, Britain, Russia and France—are striving now to establish trade with Saddam.

"The ban on trade with Iraq has only victimized the people of Iraq, a fact which has hitherto been ignored by the Security Council. The cancellation of the ban on Iraq may resolve, for a short time, some of the problems of the Iraqi nation. But the aim of such cancellation will only be in the neo-colonial interest, leading to further exploitation of the resources of Iraq."

Radio Urges Gulf States To Reassess Oil Policy

LD1902132895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 19 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The oil ministers of the six Persian Gulf Cooperation Council's [PGCC] Arab states reviewed ways on cementing cooperation amongst the oil-producing countries in a bid to maintain stability in the markets and head off a further slump in the oil prices in a session in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 18 February. All the six PGCC states are presently facing various predicaments due to a slash in their financial incomes. The cut in incomes arising from a slump in oil prices along with heavy expenditures of purchasing weapons from the West have forced these countries to cut down their public and construction budgets and devise unprecedented austerity plans. The reduction in each dollar in the annual price of oil will cut down the total annual oil income of the PGCC countries nearly 4 billion dollars.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, or the OPEC, has specified an export ceiling of 24.52 million barrels per day in an efforts to check a further decline in prices of oil and increase it to at least 21 dollars per barrel. This measure was adopted as of September 1993 by 12 OPEC countries. Despite all this, the price of oil has fluctuated way below 21 dollars a barrel and this itself arises from various political issues as well as a weak market structure.

Regardless of some sharp fluctuations at certain junctures, one can say that oil price has been varying at the present level, that is between 16 and 17 dollars a barrel, nearly over the past decade. Low oil prices over such a lengthy period prior to being related to issues like increase in the output of non-OPEC states or recourse to substitute oil energies [as heard] by consumers arises mostly from a rise in the West's political influence, especially that of America and the decisions of some main oil producers like Saudi Arabia. Another factor has been the military presence of America in the region in recent years.

At any rate, the continuation of such a situation has now technically prompted top officials in world oil industry to adjust themselves with the low oil prices. Under such conditions, some non-OPEC oil producers, like Norway and Britain, through economizing on expenses and making production methods optimal, have embarked on effective measures to increase their oil exports and to influence the oil markets.

In the opinion of experts, under such conditions, if the Arab states of the Persian Gulf region are really desirous of cooperation with other oil producers for bolstering the oil prices and increasing their foreign earnings, it is essential that they seriously re-assess their past policy and performance vis-a-vis the oil markets.

Ministers Respond to KEYHAN Questionnaire

Economics Minister Khan

NC2002200895 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 12 Feb 95 p 14

["Text" of questionnaire sent to "cabinet ministers and officials on the eve of the revolution" with responses by Morteza Mohammad Khan, minister of finance and economic affairs]

[FBIS Translated Text] 1. On the eve of the Second Five-Year Plan, how does Your Excellency assess the

Plan's performance in the area of management? While comparing the statistics of the Plan's results with the prerevolution situation, could you please tell us what successes your ministry has had in the 16 years since the revolution's victory?

[Khan] An assessment of the country's economic situation in the First Plan period indicates that the Gross National Product rose an average of 7.3 percent [per annum] in terms of actual costs. When compared to the annual target, which had been projected at 8.1 percent, this indicates a better than 90 percent success rate.

Undoubtedly, attaining over 90 percent of the target was the main aim of the economic change and is evidence of the extraordinary success of the First Plan as compared to the programs implemented prior to the victory of the Islamic Revolution. The average real annual growth in the agricultural sector reached 6 percent, which is 98 percent of the target; 8.6 percent in the oil sector, which is more than 90 percent of what was envisaged; and 9.1 percent in the Mines and Industries Department, that is, more than 60 percent of the projection. In the field of oil and gas, the annual growth was 12.7 percent—a success rate of 140 percent.

As for the performance in the Five-Year Plan, the government's monetary situation—which mostly pertains to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance—I should state that the most important success of the government is in the field of reducing the budget deficit from 50.2 percent of the entire budget in 1367 [21 March 1989-20 March 1990] to approximately two percent in 1372 [21 March 1993-20 March 1994]. This is the lowest budget deficit since 1345 [21 March 1966-20 March 1967].

Income from revenues in the First Plan showed an average growth of 33 percent, while the average growth in income from taxes envisioned in the First Plan was 26 percent. Similarly, in the case of direct revenues, the growth rate was 64.4 percent in 1372 compared to 56 percent in 1369 [21 March 1990-20 March 1991]. This indicates an improvement in the monetary system's performance.

From the viewpoint of qualitative objectives, the most important issue as regards levying of taxes, according to the great leader's [Khamene'i's] exhortations, is social justice. Currently the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance envisions making basic and fundamental changes in the revenue system, some of which have been implemented while others have completed being studied by experts. With the increase in the revenue income, the objective of social justice will be seriously pursued in society even more than before, through the following measures:

a. Extensive expert studies will be carried out on the reduction of taxation rates (as is the case with taxation of goodwill money) and conversely on broadening the base of taxation.

b. Equipping the tax information system. This has begun with preliminary planning for an economic code.

c. The implementation of a self-appraising system with regard to the lower income groups and trusting this stratum to pay their taxes. We are optimistic that this will be implemented shortly in most of the revenue departments.

d. Lower taxes for production units than for the services sector in order to better support the producers; and the higher taxes for the higher income bracket and the unharnessed capital in society.

2. Recently, the government placed the campaign against high prices at the top of its list of priorities, which was heartily welcomed by the people and media. What is Your Excellency's view—regardless of your area of management—on this subject? In your opinion, what factors can contribute to success in this campaign and what obstacles need to be removed?

[Khan] In general, inflation can have numerous causes. The most important of these is imported inflation, which stems from an increase in the prices of imported goods; an increase in production costs; an inappropriate monetary policy; an increase in cash flow; an increase in demand as compared to supply; and an unhealthy system for the distribution of commodities.

In the course of the First Plan and in the Second Plan, the growth of production and the adoption of a suitable policy for controlling the cash flow with the aim of controlling inflation has been and will continue to be stressed. However, as was stated earlier, another basic element in this regard is the distribution of goods in the economy.

In view of the importance of the this issue to the country's economy, the government has placed the supervision of the distribution system and the control of prices on its agenda. The procedure for control will utilize the mechanism of calculating the finished costs of goods while taking into account just profits for the producers. Without control of the distribution system, unfortunately the government must give various kinds of subsidies to the producers so that they will be able to produce goods at lower costs. This increases the profit margin of brokers and middlemen; and in practice, the subsidies never reach society, even though that is what their established objective is.

In this regard, the consumers have to be informed of the actual prices, which is a positive step toward their participation in the campaign to combat high prices. In addition, when the consumer is instilled with faith in combating the erratic price spiral, he will himself become an implementer of the government's policy and the final arbiter. Thus, he will become the best guarantee for the enforcement of the law.

Another outcome will be the stability and control of prices, the directing of resources to the production sector, and an increase in the potential strength of the economy in regard to various products. In addition the regulating of economic relations is one of the basic government policies in price control.

Today, in order to attain economic stability—the objectives of which are stable prices, economic growth, employment, and a balanced foreign trade—it is necessary to utilize such fiscal and monetary devices as anticyclical policies, as well as price controls and stabilization policies, which are examples of income-generating policies. This would prevent erratic price increases and eliminate extortion.

3. How do you view the international base of the Islamic Revolution in the political and cultural fields, despite the plots of its powerful foreign enemies?

[Khan] The Islamic Revolution of Iran laid the greatest foundation of a dynamic and true independence in recent centuries so that this revolution has consolidated its own niche in the world. Despite the plots of the great foreign enemies, it has been able to revive Islam as a successful sociopolitical ideology and creed with a powerful mode of thought for all generations.

What has frightened the powers of world arrogance and the foreign enemies of the Islamic Republic's system is the country's constructive ability and its rapid progress. That is because of the massive development of services, which are unparalleled, in the course of the Islamic Revolution and especially in the aftermath of the imposed [Iran-Iraq] war.

After a prolonged period, the Iranian nation was able to liberate itself from foreign economic, social, and cultural domination. Despite plots by the great foreign enemies, the Iranian nation has been able to penetrate into the depths of the Muslim and oppressed masses of the world with no weapon except the aspirations and objectives of the Islamic Revolution.

4. Before the revolution did you ever think that one day you would be pursuing important matters in the country's political arena in the capacity of a minister? To what extent have you achieved your ideals?

[Khan] I do not think that prior to the victory of the revolution, any of the present officials in the Islamic Republic of Iran had any idea of their possible future employment. This is because at that time, only the thought of a struggle—on the basis of the hallowed injunctions of the Islamic shari'ah—against the tyranny and oppression of the ruling powers, and the attainment of social justice under the aegis of an Islamic government was envisioned. In those black years, especially in the decade of 1340 [year beginning 21 March 1961] to 1350 [year beginning 21 March 1971] no one thought of anything other than exposing the tyrannical monarchical regime.

However, regarding an ideal, [preceding word in English] one should state that as the connotations of this term indicate, its attainment is quite difficult, if not impossible. The crux of the matter is to strive to achieve the ultimate. I hope that I can always move on this path with firm steps and to get close to the desired ultimate goal.

Prior to the revolution, due to the wicked performance of the tyrannical monarchical regime I was not ready to even visit its government offices. After the revolution I was prepared to participate in all the fields necessary, and my friends thought it suitable for me to participate in the administrative cadre of the country. At the outset of the revolution, I entered into the employment of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

At that time, all we thought of was how to liberate the country from the East and the West and to reconstruct it. As God is my witness, it was never important to me what position I had. The only thing that mattered was how I could serve better. Of course, so far all that I have achieved and all the positions that I have held have been with the guidance of the high-level officials of the country.

I beseech the Almighty that in this period of divine testing, I can prove to be a sincere and hardworking servant for the aspirations of the hallowed system of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The words of the meek martyred Ayatollah Beheshti resound in my ears as he said: "We are enamored of being servants, not thirsty for power." Now that I am serving as a minister in this Islamic country, I consider this an honor bestowed on me by God Almighty and I beseech him constantly to save me from faltering.

5. If you have any memories worth telling us about regarding cabinet sessions, please share them with KEYHAN's readers.

[Khan] All the cabinet sessions are fraught with memories. The memories of the dear martyrs Raja'i and Bahonar, the martyrs of 28 June who were members of the cabinet, martyrs Qandi, 'Abbaspur, Kalantari, Fayyazbakhsh are all immortal in the cabinet sessions.

Then there is the presence of the great, Islam-seeking, and patriotic personalities such as His Eminence Ayatollah [as published] Hashemi-Rafsanjani who has no peer in the past centuries who has ever ruled like him. This in itself is the greatest reminiscence, which becomes more meaningful with every passing moment.

The most important memory of the cabinet sessions is the attention to detail and the intelligence of all the members. They are extremely vigilant so that with all their being they strive to satisfy God Almighty and to improve the quality of the Islamic system.

Transport Minister Torkan

NC2102210595 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 13 Feb 95 p 14

["Text" of a questionnaire sent to cabinet ministers and officials "on the eve of the revolution anniversary" with responses by Transportation Minister Akbar Torkan]

[FBIS Translated Text] 1. We are on the threshold of the Second Five-Year Plan. What is Your Excellency's assessment of the First Five-Year Plan's performance in your area of management?

[Torkan] The Ministry of Roads and Transportation is in charge of planning for the infrastructural development of transportation, designating the parameters of investment and forging transportation links in the country. In order to fulfill this obligation as delineated in the First [Five-Year] Development Plan, numerous measures were taken by the various departments of this ministry.

Regarding road construction, nearly 4,600 kilometers of roads were constructed and became operational in the period between 1368 [year beginning 21 March 1989] and 1372 [year beginning 21 March 1993]. A comparison of the statistics indicate that prior to the revolution, the only freeway was the Tehran-Karaj Freeway, which was 35 kilometers in length. The completion of the Karaj-Qazvin segment of the freeway, which is 95 kilometers in length, and the Tehran-Qom Freeway, which is 135 kilometers, was in 1358-1359 [21 March 1979 to 20 March 1980].

At present, there are more that 476 km of freeways in the country and a total of 460 km more is being built by the government sector.

The railroads of the Islamic Republic of Iran included a network 4,567 kilometers in length which carried over 12 million tons of cargo and 6-7 million passengers in the first year of the First Five-Year Plan.

With the expansion of the railroad network by 5,400 kilometers, the Islamic Republic of Iran's railroads have become capable of transporting 19 million tons of cargo, and 9 million passengers [per year]. In both cases—that is, in the transportation of cargo and passengers—the railroads increased their efficiency by more than 50 percent.

As for the construction of railroads, the Bafq-Bandar-e'Abbas line, which is 700 km long, now links Bafq with the city of Fin-e Bozorg, for which 615 km of track was laid. God willing, in this month of Esfand [20 February-20 March] it will become completely operational. This development project by the Ministry of Transportation is a source of pride for the country.

The capacity of the commercial ports of the country, which was reported to be an average of 16 million tons in 1368 [Year beginning 21 March 1989] registered a 50 percent increase in the last year of the First Plan—with relative development of the ports and the completion of the Plan period—reaching approximately 25 million tons.

In the field of transport containers [preceding word in English] for the conveyance of commercial goods, the total volume of goods loaded and unloaded in containers rose from 153,000 tons in 1367 to 702,000 tons in the last year of the Five-Year Plan.

The country's vessels are responsible for transporting 5.3 million tons of goods related to foreign trade needs of the country. In the last year of the First Five-Year Plan these ships transshipped 8.4 million tons of the country's non-oil products, which marks an increase of 42 percent.

Among the points that merit noting in the First Five-Year Plan is the reduction of demurrage [preceding word in English] rates for docked vessels with a simultaneous expediting of loading and unloading procedures by the port and shipping organizations. In the last year of the First Plan, we also got more premiums from foreign companies for swift unloading of goods, and the positive balance that resulted was more favorable to the country's maritime transportation.

As for aerial transportation, the number of airports countrywide rose from 27 in 1367 to 32 at the end of the First Plan period. Seven more airports are under construction in Yasuj, Arak, Zanjan, Ardabil, Shahr-e Kord, Ilam, as well as the Imam Khomeyni airport. All of these will be completed by the end of the Second Plan period.

As for aviation, the number of passengers carried on a national level rose from 9 million on the domestic network to 15 million. On the foreign network it rose to 1.7 million. At the end of 1372 [year beginning 21 March 1993] the Iranian National Airlines Company had increased the number of its seats to 7,274, the [private] Aseman Company to 1,450 seats and all other Iranian companies by 1,500 seats for domestic and international routes.

2. Recently, the government placed the campaign against high prices at the top of the list of its priorities, which was heartily welcomed by the people and the media. What is Your Excellency's view—regardless of your area of management—in this regard? In your opinion, what factors can bring results in this campaign and what obstacles need to be removed?

[Torkan] The government's moves to combat high prices are serious and principled, not short term. While combating the main elements of such plunder which has exerted pressure on the weaker strata of society, the government's scheme to open chain stores all over the country will certainly rectify the system of distribution.

As statistics indicate, in the years 1355 [year beginning 21 March 1973] and 1356 one license was issued for every 100 persons for the distribution and retailing of goods, but today one person in 19 is involved in distribution. The trend toward a haphazard proliferation of stores in the city has resulted in merchants being dissatisfied with their percentage and demanding unreasonably high profits.

By setting up chain stores all over the country, the goods will be available to customers at realistic prices. so traders wishing to extort exorbitant profits will not be able to do so.

We must differentiate between high prices and black-marketeering. I believe that the great amount of cash available out of all proportion with the Gross National Product is instrumental in raising the price of goods. For example, if one day the price of cotton rises five fold, the price of sugar will also rise in the market. If the government does not take note at once, the price of shortening will rise, and then tires, and so on.

Ultimately, this results in erratic trends in the currency and gold markets as the increased cash flow generates greater demand. If the supply is not adequate, then prices soar.

As for cash, it is a means for accumulating capital. However, in our economy, we do not act on this factor. In view of the vast cash flow, which comprises 60 percent of the Gross National Product, we have double-digit inflation, which results in increasing prices. Therefore those who save money as their capital suffer the greatest losses. That is why those who wish to save prefer to do so in other forms. And this generates more demand and the prices spiral further.

This phenomenon is the main problem in combating high prices. The solution is that in every banking system instead of short and long term deposits—apart from the profits accruing from banking operations—the capital should be adjusted in accordance with inflation rate. In this manner the depositors will be able to hand over their savings to the banks with confidence and this will halt artificial demand.

3. How do you view the international base of the revolution in the political and cultural field, despite the plots of its powerful enemies?

[Torkan] In answer to this question, the best response is to be found in the interpretation and explanation given by his eminence the great leader in his Friday prayer sermon delivered on 3 February. I have nothing to add.

4. Before the revolution, did you ever think that one day, you would be pursuing important matters in the country's political arena in the capacity of a minister? To what extent have you achieved your ideals?

[Torkan] Prior to the revolution, even the prospect of the victory of the revolution was far from my mind, and even after the revolution, when I joined in the Construction Jehad, I became absorbed in my work and did not even think that one day I would serve as the head of a ministry. As for the second part of the question, which pertains to my ideals, I do not know if you mean whether I am satisfied with reaching the post of a minister or the implementation and the attainment of the objectives and aspirations which I consider my ideals in carrying out my duties. In any case, my domestic life is that of a simple employee, and I am always prepared for when I will be living the life of a simple employee without a ministerial post. Fortunately, being a minister or not being one will thus not affect my private life at all.

As for the attainment of my job-related objectives and aspirations, I should state that this depends on the possibilities and capabilities of the country. Even if I wish that in the country we should have 10,000 km of autobahns [preceding word in German] or that the railroad network of the country should be 15,000 km, this depends on the country.

At present, in view of the credits for the Second Five-Year Plan I can only hope that I can complete the projects that are already underway. If in the remainder of my term no new projects were to be started and I would have the opportunity to complete the projects which have already been begun, that would be my ideal for the future.

Health Minister Marandi

NC2002212195 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 8 Feb 95 p 3

["Text" of questionnaire sent to "cabinet ministers and officials on the eve of the revolution" with responses by Health Minister 'Ali Reza Marandi]

[FBIS Translated Text] 1. We are on the threshold of the Second Five-Year Plan. What is Your Excellency's assessment of the First Five-year Plan's performance in the area of your competence?

[Marandi] A. All the work that was carried out during the years of the tyrannical monarchical regime is far less than what has been done in the years since the revolution, especially in the course of the First Development Plan.

The number of hospitals in the country was 357 in 1357 [year beginning 21 March 1978] while at the end of the First Five-Year Plan the number had reached 724. (At the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan, there were 625 hospitals). There were 56,000 hospital beds prior to the revolution; this rose to 82,085 by the beginning of the First Five-year Plan and reached 93,822 at the end of the First Plan.

The number of specialist physicians prior to the revolution stood at 7,000 while at the end of the First Plan there were 17,000 specialist physicians.

Other interesting statistics are in the number of health clinics, rural health centers and dispensaries, urban health centers, and provincial and district health centers. In 1357, these figures were 1,800, 1,200, 1,220, and zero respectively. At the end of the First Five-Year Plan, they changed to: 12,220 health clinics, 2,146 rural health and treatment centers, 1,710 urban health centers, 231 provincial and district health centers, as well as 375 maternity centers.

The ministry has also attained great success in the field of medical education. The number of students in the medical faculty in 1357 was 25,588; this has now reached 102,321 (not including those who attend night classes).

The medical faculty in the universities rose from 1,975 in 1357 to 7,230 at the end of the First Five-Year Plan period.

Currently we have 29 medical science universities at the national level and nine independent medical science colleges, with a total of 34 medical colleges. [figures as published] In addition, prior to the victory of the magnificent Islamic Revolution there were only 11 medical colleges throughout the country.

In the field of health, the successes have been dazzling. At present 100 percent of the children below one year of age have received the necessary vaccinations.

A nationwide scheme for the eradication of polio, with the cooperation of the resistant forces of the Basij [mobilization forces] and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, was carried out in two phases.

In the first phase 9,021,917 children and in the second 9,283,045 children under five years of age were vaccinated and this constitutes 100 percent of the children in that age group.

In 1357 [year beginning 21 March 1978] infant mortality was 120 per every 1,000 children born; this has been reduced to 33 per thousand.

The successes are too numerous to incorporate in this brief report. The performance of this ministry for the past five years has been described and published in a report which you can refer to for more information.

2. Recently the government placed the campaign against high prices at the top of its list of priorities, which was strongly welcomed by the people and the media. What is Your Excellency's view—regardless of the sector you manage—in this regard? In your opinion, what factors can bring results in this campaign and what obstacles need to be removed?

[Marandi] B. As regards the campaign against high prices, there are four important factors which would have a considerable effect on the success of this plan:

—The elimination of middlemen.

—Intensive supervision of a just distribution of staple goods.

—A steady supply of essential goods to prevent temporary shortages and fluctuations.

—Strengthening domestic production in accordance with domestic needs.

3. How do you view the international base of the Islamic Revolution in the political and cultural field, despite the plots of its powerful enemies?

[Marandi] C. Despite the plots by the powers of world arrogance, the eyes of the oppressed and of the Muslims of the world are filled with hope and riveted on the Islamic Revolution of Iran. Every success gained by the revolution is a source of joy and raises the morale of the Muslims of the world while causing the fury and chagrin of the enemies of the revolution.

Even now the worldwide resistance to the tyrants and the infidels is a corollary to the lofty objectives of the Islamic Revolution, which has influenced the thinking of the revolutionary Islamic ummah. Every calculation by the world superpowers takes into account the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and they fear our reaction.

Editorial Views Mismanagement 'Culprits'

LD2202101695 Tehran IRNA in English 0749 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 22, IRNA—The Majlis (parliament) deputies should bear in mind that mismanagement would prepare a congenial ground for the economic terrorists to play havoc with the fate of the nation, said the morning daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' here Wednesday [22 February].

The English-language daily was referring in its editorial to the recent decision of Majlis on summoning minister of finance and economic affairs, Morteza Mohammad-Khani, and governor of Central Bank Mohsen Nurbakhsh to find out the real reasons behind the current chaos in the country's monetary system.

The Islamic revolution is at a very critical stage in its development, noted the paper adding that the country has just completed the first five-year development plan (with emphasis on laying down the infrastructure) and is going to launch the second one shortly.

Referring to remarks of the U.S. speaker of the house, Newt Gingrich, who had said two weeks ago that Washington should try to overthrow the Islamic government in Iran by planning a long-term struggle, the paper argued that the U.S. would "clutch at any straw to disenchant the heroic nation of Iran from the Islamic government."

As stated by the U.S. official, noted the paper, Washington was now all out to create crisis in Iran to achieve its goals. One such conspiracy, it said, "is creating an economic crisis with the collaboration of profiteers and speculators, better termed as economic terrorists."

Criticizing the recommendations which begin to pour in when an offender was brought to book, the paper stressed in conclusion that the nation—whose support for the Islamic government manifested in the February 11 masssive rallies—"expected the deputies, whom they wish to be their true representatives, to thoroughly examine the functioning of the portfolios of the two officials in order to identify the real culprits and bring them to book."

'Palestine's 'March' Urged to Continue

NC2002120095 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 20 Feb 95

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] The holy land of Palestine is a major part of Islamic territory that is the target of world arrogance. According to the Book and tradition, it is the duty of all Muslims to thwart this aggression. The opposition of the Islamic world to the Zionist regime can be studied in this canonical framework.

This territory, which is considered to be the first kiblah of the world's Muslims, has been the victim of plots hatched by the enemies of Islam and by arrogance. With the Balfour Treaty, the British planted the first imperialist seeds of the usurping regime in the holy land of Palestine. Following that, general support by arrogance headed by America for this sinister offspring led to the Israeli regime's domination. With its political, military, and financial support for Israel's inhuman acts, America consolidated the basis for its hegemony in the 1948 and 1967 wars. Later on, by infiltrating the illegitimate Arab leaders, America tried to further expand the imperialist aspects of that regime.

When the Palestinian Muslims could no longer attach their hopes to the Arab statesmen to vindicate their legitimate rights, they decided to continue their struggles by organizing a popular movement known as the Islamic intifadah. This movement started in 1987, influenced by the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and during the past seven years it has yielded immense results for the Palestinian nation.

Currently, despite the Oslo treaty between 'Arafat and the Zionist regime, Palestine's Islamic revolution continues to march its brilliant course. It strengthens the position of the Palestinian problem in the chart of Middle East conflicts and proves that Palestine is alive despite all plots and obstructionism.

Most political analysts believe that one of the major reasons that the Zionist regime signed the compromise pact with 'Arafat was that regime's incapacity to contain the anti-Zionist operations by Islamic Palestinian groups. Thus, by signing the so-called Gaza-Jericho self-rule treaty, Tel Aviv intended to place 'Arafat in a confrontational position with Islamic groups and to fan the flames of a civil war among the Palestinians. However, thanks to their political forbearance, the Islamic groups have been able to neutralize this plot by the Zionist regime.

Currently, the complete deadlock in the compromise process in all its regional dimensions has extended the arena of the activities of the combatant Islamic groups in the occupied territories. This deadlock which has been created because of the Zionist regime's indifference to UN resolutions, has once again proven to everyone that Israel is not ready to carry out its international commitments and that it does not meet the conditions for remaining in the international system.

In one of his historic messages, His Eminence Imam Khomeyni, may his soul be sanctified, by understanding the extent of the Zionists' crimes in Palestine, declared the last week in the auspicious month of Ramadan to be World Jerusalem Day so that the Muslims in the world can express their decisive support for the oppressed Palestinians. The Muslim Iranian people too, with the rest of the Muslims in the world, will participate in the Friday marches and will carry out their canonical and humanitarian duty as they have in the past years.

Pakistan

Another UN Observer 'Fired At' by Indian Troops

BK2202021895 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] There has been a report of another incident of unprovoked firing by Indian troops on a member of the UN Military Observers Group on India and Pakistan. According to reports, Lieutenant Colonel (Vorella) of Chile was fired at by automatic weapons from across the Line of Control [in Kashmir] while he was on his routine duty in Moga Village of Chandrot Subsector this afternoon. The military observer, who was flying the UN flag, narrowly escaped. Pakistani troops later escorted him to a safe place.

Minister of State Departs for Central Asian Tour

BK2002084795 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 20 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The minister of state for finance and economic affairs, Makhdum Shahabuddin, left Islamabad this morning for Almaty, capital of Kazakhstan, to begin his six-nation tour of Central Asia as a special envoy of prime minister. He will deliver invitations to the leaders of these countries to attend the forthcoming two-day ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] summit opening in federal capital on the 14th of next month. The 10-day visit of Makhdum Shahabuddin will take him to Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan besides Kazakhstan.

Talking to newsmen before departure, the minister of state for finance and economic affairs underlined the importance of ECO and said the member states could benefit mutually by pooling their resources for economic development of their people. He said restoration of peace and tranquility in Afghanistan is vital for promoting bilateral economic and close cooperation between Pakistan and Central Asia.

'U.S. Conspiracy' Seen in Emergence of Taleban

BK2202100995 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 22 Feb 95 p 12

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Quetta, Feb 21—Former Army Chief General Aslam Baig sees "greater USA conspiracy" in the phenomenal emergence of Taleban forces and said that their movement was directed specifically to contain Iran and its influence in the Central Asian States and Afghanistan.

Talking to newsmen here Tuesday [21 February], Baig appeared under no illusion in prescribing the accurate origin of the Taleban and their role in the Afghan crisis. He said that USA would under no circumstances allow installation of a fundamentalist regime in Kabul and this is why the so-called religious students idea was conceived and developed to block any such possibility.

Aslam Baig said Iran's influence was increasing in the ex-Soviet Muslim States and Afghanistan where Tehran maintained good ties with Engineer Golboddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami and Shi'ites Hezb-e-Wahdat.

"This reality in fact worries America since she believed this nexus if continues might pose potential threat to the West and ultimately form the basis for a fundamentalist bloc in the region," he remarked.

The Former Army Chief further spelled out the objectives or mission entrusted with Taleban by the USA and said these were quite simple to understand. First is to contain Iran by isolating it and neutralising her influence in the neighbouring states. Second is to bring about a pact between Taleban and combined forces of President Rabbani, his Commander Ahmad Shah Mas'ud and General Rashid, all non-Pashtoons and use it against Iranian influence. And if this pact did not materialise trigger "unimaginable blood bath between Taleban and these three forces to precipitate disintegration of Afghanistan on ethnic lines."

Mirza Aslam Baig also cited Western conspiracy of creating wedges among Iran, Turkey and Azerbaijan through Nogorono Karbagh conflict with Armenia.

He said the same exercise was being repeated in Afghanistan through Taleban to isolate Iran and diminish the chances of trans-Asian Islamic States Bloc.

U.S. Urged To Champion Human Rights in Kashmir

BK2102092695 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 21 Feb 95 p 10

[Editorial: "Indian excesses & the US connivance"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The US foreign policy has lately come under severe castigation for its spinelessness in matters of human rights violations the world over. According to a report, the chiefs of Amnesty International (USA) and Human Rights Watch held the Clinton administration responsible before the House Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights for making the issue of violations of human rights in various countries subservient to the economic considerations at home. The humanitarian organisations observe that while the USA has failed to come up with political resolve to play its expected role to avert human rights catastrophe in Chechnya, Rwanda, and Bosnia, contrarily, it has rejuvenated military ties with India for economic reasons and despite several reports of intense human rights violations by the Indian government in occupied Kashmir.

Although the well-documented egregious violations of human rights by India have tarnished its image of a secular and liberal democracy among the influential sections of the US media, the Congress, and the human rights groups, India has become a beneficiary of the US military support, and this development has elicited angry criticism of the US motives. The most broad-based linkage between the two countries came in the wake of the latter's announcement of a policy of economic liberalism, says the director of Amnesty International (USA), following which, the fresh economic prospects relegated the human rights concerns to the realm of quiet diplomacy. The violence in the Valley has claimed since 1989 between 10,000 and 20,000 lives; and while the abuses in the form of killings, rapes, and torture of the Kashmiri freedom fighters continue, the Indian government has consistently refused to allow human rights groups to conduct investigations. The fact that the United States has chosen to disregard the excesses committed by the Indian government in the Held Valley is tantamount to a tacit sanctioning of repression and slaughter. Regarding this military and trade agreement, it is widely believed domestically that the USA should have made the sale of weapons or military equipment to India conditional on improvement of the human rights situation there. Some circles advocate that the purpose can still be achieved if Clinton administration threatens to withhold economic aid and cut trade agreements until the abuses are stopped and international human rights groups are allowed into Kashmir. By taking a hardline on the issue of Kashmir, a satisfactory solution of which is necessary for a lasting peace in the strategically important area of Southeast Asia, the United States can help rebuild its diminishing image as the leader of the free world in the post-cold war world.

Envoy Criticized for Attending Israeli Reception

BK2102134395 Islamabad KHABRAIN in Urdu 21 Feb 95 p 10

[Editorial: "Contacts With Israel?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to a report, the first formal contact has been established between Ahmad Kamal, Pakistan's representative at the United Nations, and Israeli representative Gad Ya'aqobi. Reporting this, a newspaper says that the contact was made in New York three weeks ago when the Pakistani representative attended a reception hosted by the Israeli envoy. The report says that the contact was made at the personal level because the Pakistani Government does not have diplomatic relations with Israel and there has been no high-level political contact between the two. The Pakistani Government's stance is that it will not recognize Israel until the disputes between Israel and the Arab countries are resolved. The Israeli Government, however, has made several attempts to establish contact with the Pakistani Government.

The first thing that needs to be answered is why the Pakistani representative attended the Israeli representative's reception. As Pakistan has not yet recognized Israel, the Pakistani representative's participation in the Israeli representative's reception is incompatible with his status. What needs to be investigated is whether Ahmad Kamal sought the permission of the Pakistani Government to attend or if he was given prior permission to attend the reception. If not, will the government take action against the Pakistani representative at the United Nations? Though not appropriate at the governmental level, an individual can meet with an Israeli national in a foreign country. A Pakistani holding a high position should not do that, however. We feel that no Pakistani should make any contact with an Israeli national in any third country because Pakistanis cannot forget the sanctity of Jerusalem. How then can he meet with an Israeli?

We are justified in saying that the Pakistani Government should clearly state its position on this issue and inform the people of the facts. We have a democratic system, democratic bodies, provincial assemblies, and the powerful institutions of the National Assembly and Senate. If the Pakistani Government has taken a step toward recognizing Israel. it must discuss the issue in those institutions with the representatives of the people and seek their opinion. If the government makes a decision on its own without doing this, the people will not accept it. Any Muslim or patriotic Pakistani will consider making contact, developing relations, or attending the receptions of Israeli leaders as a conspiracy against the country and the community until the independence of Jerusalem is secured and a sovereign Palestinian state is established. We agree that some Arab and Islamic countries have good relations with Israel. Any action that hurts the feelings of Pakistanis will not succeed, however, because Pakistanis are very sensitive on this issue.

Editorial Views Indian-Sponsored Security Forum

BK2202101395 Islamabad THE NATION in English 22 Feb 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Track-2 diplomacy"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Indian High Commission in Islamabad has issued visas to over 100 Pakistani intellectuals, perhaps the largest ever group of Pakistanis to travel across the border on a goodwill mission. Ostensibly, the purpose is to attend a 'people-to-people' forum on 'Security and Non-Proliferation' to be held in new Delhi on February 24-25, but it is in fact a continuation of the process of what has been called 'Track-2 diplomacy'. Several rounds of the 'unofficial dialogue' have already been held amid hopes of breaking some new ground in the stalemated Pakistan-India negotiations for nomalisation of relations. Nevertheless, the outcome has been no different from the official talks which have been suspended since New Delhi's willingness to discuss the Kashmir dispute turned out to be a mere ploy to score points in its diplomatic offensive. Opinions would differ on why the Indians have been so generous in letting a 'mega'-Pakistani team participate in the new Delhi forum. Some people may see it as a signal for de-escalation of confrontation and hence a goodwill gesture which ought to be reciprocated. The official circles in Islamabad, however, do not seem to share such an optimistic view of the forthcoming 'unofficial dialogue'. Among the participants from Pakistan are known public figures whose credentials and intentions for articulating the national perspective on issues of discord in the region cannot be disputed, and it will not be easy for the Indians to trick them into endorsing a charter for peace and security in South Asia which does not take into account Pakistan's national interest. Nonetheless, the Pakistani team needs to guard against the possibility of the 'people-to-people' forum being exploited for New Delhi's PR [public relations] campaign.

On the face of it, the New Delhi gathering is an unofficial moot but, by all accounts, it has the tacit backing of the Indian government which would like to use the opportunity to put across the message that while India wants to normalise relations, Pakistan is not willing to cooperate. The Pakistani intellectuals must comprehend the subtle but basic differences between the approaches of Pakistan and India to the question of peace and normalisation of relations. Islamabad cannot, under any circumstances, buy the Indian recipe of 'step-by-step diplomacy' or 'incremental approach' to normalise relations, as it suggest delinking of Kashmir, the core issue of discord, from the normalisation process. As long as the Indian intellectuals remain hostage to new Delhi's official line on Kashmir, and are not willing to concede that Kashmir is not an integral part of India, any number of unofficial dialogues would be an exercise in futility. If it fails to address the core issue of Kashmir in its deliberations in a meaningful way, the latest round of Track-2 diplomacy is doomed to achieve very little. Merely proposing peace in South Asia by focusing on peripheral issues and suggesting so-called 'confidence-building' measures, while the Indian occupation army continues its reign of terror in Kashmir might prove to be too little too late.

Editorial Defends Christians' Death Sentence

BK2002060795 Karachi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 16 Feb 95 p 10

[Editorial: "J. Salik's Apt Argument"]

[FBIS Translated Text] J. Salik, the federal minister for population welfare, has said that the death sentence passed against two Christians for their blasphemous remarks against the apostle of God is Pakistan's internal matter and no country in the world, including Britain and the United States, has any right to interfere in our domestic affairs. Given that antagonistic voices have been raised and attempts made to create religious hatred in the wake of the announcement regarding the punishment of these Christians, J. Salik's statement represents the voice of reason, peace, and order under which Pakistani Muslims and Christians have been living together in a spirit of peaceful coexistence since the formation of Pakistan.

There is no denying the fact that all minorities, including Christians, enjoy full rights in Pakistan and there is no sphere of Pakistani national life in which the Christian community is not represented. As for religion, our religion enjoins us to give the utmost respect and honor to all prophets. There is no Muslim who does not use respectful words for Jesus Christ, peace be upon him. In the same manner, Muslims also expect that no group will speak irreverently of the pious life of Prophet Muhammad, may the blessings and mercy of God be upon him. Because the Pakistani penal code allows the death sentence for blasphemy, no one who receives this punishment can be called the target of vindictive action. A similar law exists in Britain under which offenders are punished for blasphemy against Christianity, even though liberalism [preceding word in English] in Western society has distorted the forms of religious practice. Pakistan, as an ideological Islamic state, cannot tolerate blasphemy against the Prophet. This kind of situation will not arise if all minorities exhibit feelings of mutual respect. Britain and the so-called human rights organizations have unleashed their propaganda with a particular motive and not because of their sympathy for the Christians. If they were sympathetic, they would have taught the Christians to respect the law of the land. It is hoped that the Christian community will heed J. Salik's voice of reason.

Sri Lanka

Peace Delegation Gets 'Warm Welcome' in Jaffna

BK1802141995 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 18 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A 17-member southern peace delegation which included three MP's, two Bikkus [Buddhist clergy], and [words indistinct] was given a warm welcome in Jaffna yesterday evening. Reports reaching Colombo said that the delegation which was accompanied by 20 others, including [words indistinct] and journalists crossed over to the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] held area at 0920 [0350 GMT] yesterday after a brief ceremony at Tandikkulam, the northern most point under government's control. The delegation received the blessings of the clergy of Sri Lanka's four main religions—Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. People's Alliance MP Vasudeva Nanayakara, an academic Dr. (Jayadeva Viyangoda) said they were going to Jaffna to convey to their northern brothers and sisters the genuine feelings and desires of the people of the soil. Brigadier Lionel Balagala of Task Force- II, the ground commander liaising with the LTTE military leaders of Vavuniya under the cessation of hostilities agreement accompanied the peace delegation over the no man's land, the LTTE controlled area. At Nochchimoddai the delegation was received by Kutty, LTTE's military commander of Vavuniya; his deputy Regan; and Kulatheepan, LTTE's chief administrator of Vavuniya District. The delegation and the others who went with them traveled in five vans and reached Kilinochchi around noon. A convoy of boats took them to Kilaly from where they will return to Vavuniya on Sunday. In an interview with our Vavuniya special correspondent, Mr. Nanayakara said that he was hopeful of meeting LTTE chief Veluppillai Prabhakaran. He said that he would convey to Prabhakaran the southern people's overwhelming desire for peace.

A team of engineers will leave Colombo for Jaffna today with Jaffna GA [Government Agent] K. Ponnambalam to formulate plans for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the war-ravaged peninsula. A government spokesman said the team will plan out the rebuilding of the Jaffna library and study the framework for restoring roads, electricity, and telecommunication facilities in the Peninsula. He said a ship load of construction equipment and building materials is now ready at the Colombo port to be dispatched to the north tomorrow. Reports said the shipment included 2,000 barrels of tar, road rollers, cement, electrical equipment, and other goods. The Jaffna GA, K. Ponnambalam, and Municipal Commissioner Balasingham were in Colombo for discussion with officials of the Presidential Task Force for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the north. The developments are a sequel to their two-day talks in Colombo. The team to the north includes engineers and architects from the Urban Development Authority and the State Engineering Corporation. The spokesman said that the team had been asked to ensure that the Jaffna library is restored to its original shape and architectural design. The team will prepare the ground plan for the proposed reconstruction and rehabilitation work in the north and have it ready when the ministerial team visits Jaffna 1st of next month to inaugurate the work. It is also reliably learned that the Ceylon Electricity Board is arranging two ships, two 250 JVA [expansion unknown] generators to Jaffna soon to implement the restoration of power on the peninsula.

LTTE Shows Signs of Accepting Federal System

BK2102125495 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 21 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] has shown signs of accepting a federal system of government under a united Sri Lanka. LTTE theoretician Anton Balasingham has told the peace delegation that returned to Colombo yesterday that the LTTE leadership would consider any proposal by the government for a federal system of administration. Speaking at the news conference in Colombo yesterday, the leader of the peace delegation, Parliamentarian Vasudeva Nanayakkara, said that the LTTE had shown its belief in democracy by their gesture in extending an invitation to the delegation from the South to visit Jaffna. He also told newsmen that over 30,000 people in Jaffna and another 25,000 in Kilinochchi, who attended the public meeting, had expressed in union that they were determined to re-establish peace in the country. Mr. Nanayakkara said that the people in the north are undergoing severe hardship and that he will urge the government to take immediate action to provide the basic essential goods and services. Answering a question, Mr. Nananayakkara said that the assumption that the peace talks depended on the Pooneryn camp was baseless and that the LTTE deputies had told him that a request to close down the Pooneryn camp and the reopening of the Sangupity road way was only to facilitating the people in Jaffna to carry out their day-to-day business and lead a normal life. The peace delegation said that peace should be restored in the north at any price, but at a reasonable price and that the attitude of the people looking at the LTTE with vengeance must be changed so that there would be everlasting peace in the country.

British Minister Notes Interest in Reconstruction Plan

BK2202123095 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 22 Feb 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Britain is interested in joining in an $816 million plan to rebuild Sri Lanka's northern areas. Government officials said today that the offer was made by visiting British Trade Minister Richard Needham during talks with President Chandrika Kumaratunga. The officials quoted British Minister Needham, accompanied by 31 British businessmen looking for trade and investment opportunities in Sri Lanka, as saying that Britain would like to get involved in power and energy projects in the north.

The Sri Lankan Government has prepared a rehabilitation plan costing $816 million for the north, including repairs to roads, telecommunications, power supply, schools, and hospitals and is looking for foreign support to fund them. The presidential task force entrusted with the work is scheduled to meet potential donor countries and agencies today to obtaln assistance. Damage to utilities in the north and east in a 12 year war runs into several millions of U.S. dollars.

Mr. Needham, heading Britain's biggest business delegation to Colombo, said Sri Lanka was a high priority on London's agenda. We see Sri Lanka becoming the next industrialized country in Asia, he told reporters after signing a letter of intent with Sri Lankan Energy Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte to build seven mini-hydroelectric plants costing $60 million and designed to generate a total output of 40 megawatts. The plants, to be financed by the private sector, will be built by Britain's (Biowater) Group on a build, operate, and transfer contract for 30 years.

The visiting British minister said that the British Government is pleased with the peace efforts pursued by the Colombo government. Negotiators will resume soon the fourth round of talks with the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], which should pave the way for increased development in the country.

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